United Nations S/PV.3616

Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3616th Meeting

Friday, 5 January 1996, 4.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Sir John Weston	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Nkgowe
	Chile	Mr. Somavia
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Germany	Mr. Eitel
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Mano Queta
	Honduras	Mr. Rendón Barnica
	Indonesia	Mr. Wisnumurti
	Italy	Mr. Menzione
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

Letter dated 29 December 1995 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1995/1068)

96-85016 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 4.40 p.m.

Expression of welcome to the new members of the Security Council and of thanks to the outgoing members of the Security Council

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council to be held this year, I should like to welcome the new members of the Council: Chile, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Poland and the Republic of Korea. We all look forward with confidence to their participation in the work of the Council, which will be of invaluable assistance in the discharge of the Council's enormous responsibilities as it tackles so many challenges.

I should also like to express the Council's gratitude to the outgoing members for their important contributions to the Council's work. The representatives of Argentina, the Czech Republic, Nigeria, Oman and Rwanda all, in an excellent manner, contributed their talents to the conduct of the business of the Council.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: I should also like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, for the service he rendered as President of the Council during the month of December 1995. I express my deep appreciation to Ambassador Lavrov for the skilful manner in which he conducted the Council's business last month. I have particularly admired his patience, courtesy, efficiency and thoroughness, as well as his quick-wittedness and his overall lightness of touch, and we have all also admired the way in which he was so ably assisted in his efforts by his entire delegation.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

Letter dated 29 December 1995 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1995/1068)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Burundi, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Terence (Burundi) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in the course of its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/1995/1068, which contains the text of a letter dated 29 December 1995 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1996/8, which contains the text of a letter dated 3 January 1996 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the letter of 29 December 1995 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Council on developments in Burundi (S/1995/1068). The Council shares the Secretary-General's deep concern at the situation in Burundi, which has been characterized by daily killings, massacres, torture and arbitrary detention. It condemns in the strongest terms those persons responsible for such actions, which must cease immediately. It encourages all States to take the measures deemed necessary to prevent such persons from travelling abroad and receiving any kind of support. It reiterates its profound concern about radio stations which incite hatred and acts of genocide and encourages Member States and others concerned to cooperate in the identification and dismantling of them. The Council calls upon all concerned in Burundi to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from all acts of violence. It reiterates that all who commit or authorize the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law

are individually responsible for such violations and should be held accountable. In this context, it stresses the importance it attaches to the work of the International Commission of Inquiry established pursuant to its resolution 1012 (1995) of 28 August 1995 and undertakes to study carefully the letter from the Secretary-General dated 3 January 1996 containing an interim report on that work (S/1996/8).

"The Security Council is gravely concerned at recent attacks on personnel of international humanitarian organizations, which have led to the suspension of essential assistance to refugees and displaced persons and to the temporary withdrawal of international personnel. The Council welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to ask the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to visit Burundi to discuss with the Burundi authorities steps that might be taken to defuse the situation. It underlines that the authorities in Burundi are responsible for the security of personnel of international humanitarian organizations and of the refugees and displaced persons there and calls upon the Government of Burundi to provide adequate security to food convoys and humanitarian personnel.

"The Security Council welcomes the assumption of his functions by the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi and calls on all concerned to support his efforts. It commends the work of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in seeking to promote dialogue and national reconciliation in Burundi, as well as the role played there by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It welcomes the decision of the OAU in Addis Ababa on 19 December 1995 to extend the mandate of the OAU Mission in Burundi for another three months and to strengthen the civilian component of the Mission. The Council also welcomes the outcome of the Cairo Conference of Heads of State of the Great Lakes Region on 29 November 1995, supports the work of the facilitators appointed by it and emphasizes once again the importance it attaches to all States acting in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Cairo Declaration as well as those adopted at the Regional Conference held in Bujumbura in February 1995. It stresses the importance of continued attention by the international community as a whole to the situation in Burundi and encourages Member States to intensify contacts and visits.

"The Security Council notes the proposals referred to in the Secretary-General's letter of 29 December 1995. It will consider these and other proposals he may submit in the light of the reports of Mrs. Ogata's mission and from his Special Representative in Burundi. It also requests the Secretary-General to consider what role United Nations personnel in the region and other support personnel might play in Burundi.

"The Security Council reaffirms its support for the Convention of Government of 10 September 1994, which constitutes the institutional framework for national reconciliation in Burundi and for the institutions of Government established in line with it. It calls once again upon all political parties, military forces and elements of civil society in Burundi fully to respect and implement the Convention of Government and to give their continued support to the institutions of Government established in line with it.

"The Security Council will remain seized of this matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1996/1.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3617

Security Council
Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3617th Meeting
Monday, 8 January 1996, 11.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir John Weston	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Nkgowe
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. He Yafei
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Germany	Mr. Henze
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Mano Queta
	Honduras	Mr. Rendón Barnica
	Indonesia	Mr. Wibisono
	Italy	Mr. Ferrarin
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	United States of America	Mr. Gnehm

Agenda

The situation in Croatia

Report on the situation of human rights in Croatia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1019 (1995) (S/1995/1051)

96-85022 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. François Mitterrand, former President of France

The President: It is with great sadness that we have received this morning the news of the passing away of former President François Mitterrand.

President Mitterrand played a pivotal role in the history of his country, indeed of the world. His political life spanned five decades, during which he played an active and influential role as a Cabinet minister, as a political leader and as a statesman. In recent years, President Mitterrand was instrumental in the process of the unification of Europe. President Mitterrand was also known for his determination and his courage, which he demonstrated until his last days.

President Mitterrand was a friend of the United Nations and a strong defender of its principles and objectives.

Today, the world mourns the passing away of this great man. On behalf of all members of the Council, I should like to ask the Permanent Representative of France, His Excellency Ambassador Alain Dejammet, to convey our deepest sympathy to the family of President Mitterrand and to the Government and the people of France.

I now invite the members of the Council to rise and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of President Mitterrand.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): Upon the announcement of the death of Mr. François Mitterrand, former President of the French Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, made the following statement:

> "President François Mitterrand passed away this morning. I have just come from paying him my final respects. I have also conveyed to his family my condolences and those of the nation.
>
> "For 14 years, Mr. Mitterrand wrote an important page of the history of our country. He ensured the smooth functioning of our institutions. He allowed the democratic transfer of power to go forward calmly. He tried to strengthen solidarity, and he resolutely advanced the process of building Europe.
>
> "Faced with illness, he showed exceptional courage. Great was the man who has left us. It is with great emotion and respect that I hail him."

I thank you, Mr. President, for having associated the Council and all its members with this tribute.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Croatia

Report on the situation of human rights in Croatia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1019 (1995) (S/1995/1051)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Croatia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nobilo (Croatia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in the course of its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report on the situation of human rights in Croatia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1019 (1995), document S/1995/1051.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General of 21 December 1995 submitted pursuant to its resolution 1019 (1995) of 9 November 1995 on Croatia and in particular the humanitarian situation and human rights violations described therein.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in the former sectors North and South in the Republic of Croatia, as described in the report of the Secretary-General, including killings of several hundreds of civilians, systematic and widespread looting and arson and other forms of destruction of property. The Council expresses its deep concern that there is a considerable discrepancy between the number of perpetrators that have so far been brought to justice and the number of reported violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Council urges the Government of the Republic of Croatia to make every effort to arrest all perpetrators and bring them promptly to trial.

"The Security Council is disturbed by the humanitarian and security situation of the mostly elderly Serb population who have remained in the former sectors in the Republic of Croatia. The Council is gravely concerned at the information contained in the report on continuing extensive harassment and intimidation, looting of property and other forms of abuse. It reaffirms once again its demand that the Government of the Republic of Croatia take urgent measures to stop all such acts immediately and calls on the Government of the Republic of Croatia to provide urgently needed food, medical assistance and proper shelter to the Serb population.

"The Security Council reaffirms that all those who commit violations of international humanitarian law will be held individually responsible in respect of such acts. It recalls with dismay the failure to date of the Government of the Republic of Croatia to transfer to the custody of the International Tribunal established pursuant to its resolution 827 (1993) persons indicted by the Tribunal and expresses its concern at the recent appointment of one of those indicted to a position in the Croatian army. The Council reiterates that all States must cooperate fully with the International Tribunal and its organs.

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern at the situation of the refugees from the Republic of Croatia who wish to return. The Council shares the Secretary-General's view that the rights of the members of the Serb population who fled during the military operation to return to their homes in safety and dignity are being severely curtailed by the absence of constructive measures to facilitate their return. The Council reaffirms its demand that the Government of the Republic of Croatia respect fully the rights of the members of the local Serb population, including their right to remain, leave or return in safety, and demands that that Government create conditions conducive to the return of those persons and urgently establish procedures to facilitate the processing of requests by persons wishing to return. It also urges the Government of the Republic of Croatia to refrain from any measure which would adversely affect the exercise of the right to return.

"The Security Council reaffirms its call on the Republic of Croatia to lift any time-limits placed on the return of refugees to reclaim their property. It notes the decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia of 27 December 1995 to suspend the deadline set in the relevant Croatian law as a step in the right direction. The Council will follow closely whether the Republic of Croatia will lift any such time-limit in a definitive manner.

"The Security Council takes note with appreciation of the decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia of 30 December 1995 to suspend criminal proceedings against and release 455 local Serbs detained on suspicion of armed rebellion. The Council calls on the Government of the Republic of Croatia to take the appropriate measures to ensure that the right to a fair trial of those Serbs who remained and have been arrested and accused of war crimes or armed rebellion is safeguarded.

"The Security Council affirms that it is necessary to ensure that the rights of persons belonging to the Serb minority are adequately safeguarded in the legal and constitutional framework of the Republic of Croatia. It urges the Government of Croatia to rescind its decision to suspend several articles of the 'Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and the Rights of National and Ethnic Communities in the Republic of

Croatia' as described in the report of the Secretary-General. The Council stresses that strict respect for the rights of persons belonging to the Serb minority will also be of great importance to the implementation of the Basic Agreement of 12 November 1995 on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (S/1995/951, annex).

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to keep the Council regularly informed on the progress of measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Croatia to implement resolution 1019 (1995) and the demands set out in this statement, requests the Secretary-General to report to it no later than 15 February 1996 on this matter and expresses its intention to act as appropriate.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1996/2.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.3618

Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3618th Meeting

Friday, 12 January 1996, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Sir John Weston	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	Chile	Mr. Somavia
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Germany	Mr. Henze
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Mano Queta
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Sriyono
	Italy	Mr. Ferrarin
	Poland	Mr. Matuszewski
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/1996/5)

96-85044 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia (S/1996/5)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Georgia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Chkheidze (Georgia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, document S/1996/5.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1996/16, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1996/9, which contains the text of a letter dated 8 January 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The first speaker is the representative of Georgia, on whom I now call.

Mr. Chkheidze (Georgia): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on assuming the functions of President of the Security Council for this month. We believe that under your skilful guidance, the Security Council will successfully continue to fulfil its difficult and responsible task.

Allow me also sincerely to congratulate the five new members on their election to the Security Council. I wish to express the hope that their efforts will add a new impetus to the important work of this body.

On behalf of my Government and the people of Georgia, I should like to extend warmest words of appreciation to the United Nations, its Security Council and, personally, to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as well as to his Special Envoy, Ambassador Brunner, and his Deputy, Mr. Bota, for the attention and good will they have accorded the dramatic processes in Georgia.

I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the group of countries known as Friends of Georgia and to the Russian Federation as facilitator for their tireless efforts to bring about a comprehensive political settlement of the protracted conflict in my country.

Allow me also to commend the joint activities being carried out by the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the peace-keeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in monitoring the cease-fire, as well as their efforts to facilitate the repatriation of thousands of refugees.

Today the Security Council is once again in session to deliberate on the situation in Georgia. Any decision whatsoever adopted in this Chamber is of paramount importance for the Government of my country. The awareness of the constant care and attention accorded to Georgia by the international community inspires hope for the ultimate triumph of justice. The firm position of the Security Council regarding the developments in the troubled region of Georgia has repeatedly thwarted the aspirations of the separatists to divide the country and to put its sovereignty in question. The Georgian people are gratified by the strong stand of the Council against any manifestation of separatism and for political and material support for Georgia's efforts to overcome this crisis.

Having experienced bitter lessons of history, the Georgian Government has always ascribed special importance to the meaning of peace and sought to bring stability and balance to the Caucasus region.

It has become clear that the objective of establishing market-oriented and democratic principles cannot be attained solely by declarations of good will and the dissemination of truthful information about the processes in the region. Indisputably, the process of the world's political change is not yet completed. It has just reached its most painful phase.

The conflict in Abkhazia is only a part of the scheme conceived by the henchmen of totalitarian revenge. Unfortunately, due to economic, political and geographical factors, the Caucasus has turned into the main theatre of these dramatic developments.

Is it possible to forget that not so long ago the leaders of the Abkhaz separatists joined those who attempted to save the Soviet empire and were the most active members of the notorious radical grouping known as Soyuz? Equipped with communist slogans, separatists provoked the confrontation and then turned it into a lasting ethnic conflict.

Abkhaz separatists stubbornly continue to intimidate the civilian population through kidnappings, tortures and summary executions. People are deprived of minimal living conditions and struggle to survive in abject poverty and humiliation. Their victims are not only Georgians, but also those Abkhazis who have realized the true motive of the conflict and have condemned the adventurist policies of the separatists.

Despite the resolutions of the Security Council calling for the unconditional return of refugees to their homes to be ensured, only a small group of displaced persons has managed to return to the region of Gali. They live particularly unprotected, under the constant threat of being executed or of being evicted from their homes for ever.

On January 5, 1996 in the village of Sheshleti in the Gali region, Abkhaz boeviks brutally tortured and killed innocent civilians, Mr. Sanaia and six members of his family, including his wife, children and grandchildren. Mr. Sanaia's two neighbours, who had come to prevent the massacre, were also executed on the spot. In carrying out this barbaric act, the separatists once again overrode numerous resolutions of the Security Council and ignored the presence of the United Nations observers and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping forces in the region. It is clear that by being represented at different international levels, leaders of the separatists promote their names and drag out peace negotiations. They are trying their best to transform the Abkhaz conflict into a Balkan-like conflagration.

The Georgian Government has always been committed to the peaceful resolution of the conflict, for we realize that only a negotiated settlement of the dispute can meet the interests of my people and those of the international community. The adherence of the Georgian population to this course was reflected in the presidential and parliamentary elections held in Georgia on 5 November 1995. At the same time, numerous breaches of agreements by the Abkhaz side, violations of the provisions of Security Council resolutions and attempts to ignore, evade and negotiate away their obligations have brought us to the conclusion that peace has to be enforced. The enforcement of peace was the only solution for Bosnia and the same is likely to be true for the Caucasus.

The recent massacre in the Gali region provokes pain and resentment. The President of Georgia, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, has expressed his deep concern over this tragic incident and stressed that it was aimed at hampering the peace process and at the institutionalization of "ethnic cleansing" and genocide against Georgians in the Abkhaz region.

On behalf of my President, today I appeal to the Security Council to assist us by using its capacity to stop further bloodshed and restore peace in Georgia. We deeply hope that the members of the Security Council, all interested parties, will once again seriously consider the situation in my country and will take necessary measures to prevent the imminent escalation of this dispute.

The President: I thank the representative of Georgia for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/1996/16) before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Henze (Germany): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, upon your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I am sure that the experience you bring to this task will be of great help in our work

and I can only pledge that we will cooperate with you. At the same time, I would like to thank Ambassador Lavrov and his delegation for the excellent work they did in the presidency of the Council last month. Since my knowledge of English is limited, and German, I regret to say, is not an official language of the Council, I will refrain from poetical efforts and simply say how much we admired Ambassador Lavrov's efforts to speed up the work of the Council, and I am glad to see that you are trying very efficiently to follow his example.

Let me briefly comment at the outset on a development which, until now, has been discussed only in our informal consultations and say that my Government is deeply disturbed about the recent fighting in Liberia. We understand that Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), while deploying its forces throughout the country, was attacked by one of the warring factions in the Tubmanburg area. In these attacks, ECOMOG suffered a considerable number of casualties. We strongly condemn any attacks on peace-keeping forces such as ECOMOG. We would furthermore like to extend our deep condolences to the Governments involved in ECOMOG and the families of the victims.

The excellent and comprehensive report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, has provided us with a clear picture and a solid basis for our decision on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for another six months. The draft resolution before us incorporates numerous and valuable contributions by many Council members. It is, I am convinced, well balanced and comprehensive. It is clear and unambiguous in pointing at those responsible for the deadlock in the political negotiation process and specific in what we expect from the Abkhaz side.

This is why Germany will vote in favour of the draft resolution. It is understood that the resolution will eventually have to be reviewed in the light of the results of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit meeting scheduled for 19 January.

My Government believes that it is imperative to quickly put an end to the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia. Peace can be achieved only by a mutually satisfactory compromise on the basis of full respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and in the framework of the newly adopted Constitution of the Republic of Georgia. The new Georgian Constitution gives ample room for a federative arrangement for Abkhazia, and I am convinced that this is the direction the Head of State and the Government of the Republic of Georgia are willing to go. It is the Abkhaz side that is clearly responsible for the virtual standstill in the negotiating process.

I hope and believe that the draft resolution on which we shall take action today will convince the Abkhaz side that all Council members are unambiguous in their commitment to the full territorial integrity of Georgia. Nobody in Abkhazia should expect that the international community will change this fundamental position or come to support the refusal to conduct meaningful negotiations. A fundamental rethinking on the Abkhaz side is imperative, and the impatience of the Council is growing. Ethnic killings and the creation of an atmosphere of violence and insecurity in order to discourage the return of refugees and displaced persons are totally unacceptable to the international community. The results of so-called ethnic cleansing will not be accepted or recognized. This is the message we want to get across to the Abkhaz side.

My Government is equally concerned about the humanitarian situation in the territories under Abkhaz control, as well as among the 250,000 refugees and displaced persons who have been forced out of their homes. There has been little real progress in this area, due mainly to the unchanged political situation and the uncooperative stance of the Abkhaz authorities. We welcome the fact that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been able to resume its presence in the Gali region.

Let me stress that Germany fully and wholeheartedly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at a comprehensive political settlement, with the assistance of the Russian Federation as facilitator. Both the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ambassador Brunner, and his resident Deputy, Ambassador Bota, are to be commended for their dedicated work in a difficult situation. We will be very interested to hear their proposals on possible ways to bring the conflict closer to a peaceful solution in spite of the discouraging situation we are facing right now. The Russian Federation's efforts as facilitator are equally indispensable; Russia seems best equipped to make the Abkhaz side actually listen. I would like to use this opportunity to thank also the members of UNOMIG for the important work they have carried out in the field, in close and good cooperation with the peace-keeping units of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), to which we also pay tribute.

While we fully support what UNOMIG is doing on the ground, we are uneasy about the possible prospect of renewing UNOMIG's mandate time and again without any tangible political progress. We do not wish to contribute to the perpetuation of the present situation in Abkhazia; rather, we see UNOMIG as a valuable instrument to generate a meaningful and effective peace process. It is with this understanding that Germany supports the extension of the UNOMIG mandate for another six months.

The President: I thank the representative of Germany for the kind words he addressed to me.

I am sure that the whole Council would want to associate itself with the words of condolence expressed by the representative of Germany to the families of those killed or injured in the recent tragic outburst of violence in Liberia.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I am fully confident that, with your experience and your diplomatic skill, you will conduct our work in an entirely successful manner. Please be assured of the complete cooperation and support of the Italian delegation.

At the same time, I want to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Lavrov and his delegation for the outstanding way in which that representative guided the work of the Council during the month of December.

Italy will vote in favour of the draft resolution renewing the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). We believe that its contents give a clear and firm indication of the Security Council's position on the question of Abkhazia, Georgia.

We agree that there is a need to establish the basic political conditions to support the negotiations. The parties, and particularly the Abkhaz leadership, need to step up their efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the crisis based on the principles long affirmed by the Council relating to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The parliamentary elections of November 1995, of which the Council would rightly take note, are a positive element, especially considering President Shevardnadze's statement of 26 November 1995, which clearly expressed the Georgian Government's willingness to find a balanced and reasonable constitutional solution. My delegation's support for the draft resolution is based also on the growing concern it would voice over the humanitarian situation in Abkhazia, particularly in the Gali region.

We were shocked at the news provided by the Permanent Representative of Georgia regarding the events of 5 January in Sheshleti. These events unfortunately seem to confirm an increasing climate of violence, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, which describes the operations of the Abkhaz military in the Gali region in early November.

In this context, UNOMIG's activities must not contribute to an indefinite paralysis of the situation. On the contrary, thanks to effective and constructive collaboration with the forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), UNOMIG should continue to play a dynamic role. One wonders what might have happened in early November, for example, had it not been for the vigilance of observers and peace-keepers in the Gali region. UNOMIG's role should help to restore a climate of security that will finally make it possible to settle the crucial problem of the return of refugees.

In this regard, the close collaboration between UNOMIG, the UNHCR and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) represents a positive element in a general context that, unfortunately, does not carry much promise of a breakthrough, as the Secretary-General's report underlines. Nevertheless, the United Nations, the Russian facilitator and the OSCE must pursue their efforts: other crises that were once considered intractable have ultimately yielded to peace agreements, and the Abkhaz question too can be settled by following the difficult road of negotiation.

The President: I thank the representative of Italy for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for his excellent stewardship last month.

As a new member of the Security Council, my delegation would like to acknowledge the commendable efforts of the Council thus far to bring about a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia. I acknowledge in particular the efforts of the countries that

comprise the Friends of Georgia. We note the valuable contribution of the Russian Federation as facilitator; that country has striven with commitment and resolve to create an atmosphere for optimal dialogue and compromise between the two parties concerned. My delegation also expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his informative report on recent developments in the region. Finally, we offer special thanks to Ambassador Brunner, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and to Mr. Bota, his resident Deputy and Head of Mission of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), as well as to the personnel under his command, for their dedication and perseverance in carrying out, under difficult conditions, the tasks entrusted to them by the Council.

My delegation would also like to express its full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to achieve a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, including the question of the future status of Abkhazia. Given the historical realities of this issue, my delegation recognizes the need for Abkhazia to possess a certain degree of autonomy. However, as the Security Council has reiterated on various occasions, any settlement of the conflict must be based upon the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

Given our deep concern over the lack of progress in the political discussions to date, we stand ever hopeful that the Abkhaz side will adopt a more flexible and realistic approach to this question so that a timely and acceptable outcome for both sides may be reached.

As we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, in which humanity is determined to create a more peaceful and just world, I believe that the disintegrative trend, accompanied by acts of brute violence and destruction, as witnessed in some parts of the world, should not find any rightful place in the new era. Despite the fact that there have been no armed confrontations between the two parties recently, the ongoing impasse in the political process and the continued reports of criminal activity, such as looting, beatings and torture, particularly in the Gali region, have been a source of grave concern and distress.

The plight of refugees and displaced persons in the region is particularly worrisome. Given the enormous hardship inflicted upon them in the harsh winter season, my delegation urges the early resolution of this dire situation as soon as possible.

We are especially troubled by the obstruction posed by the Abkhaz side to the expeditious return of the refugees and displaced persons to their place of origin in Abkhazia, and we thus strongly call upon the Abkhaz authorities to accede to a pragmatic timetable and to expedite the process of voluntary return, in accordance with the procedures proposed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) under the Quadripartite Agreement.

Moreover, my delegation calls upon the parties to further cooperate with UNOMIG, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force and the UNHCR to create an environment conducive to the return of refugees and displaced persons.

We would like to convey our deep appreciation to UNOMIG for its contributions to containing the situation in Abkhazia, and we also commend the close cooperation between UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force.

As pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, it is indeed regrettable that the requisite ingredients for a full solution are not yet at hand and that a political settlement remains tenuous. The reality of the situation clearly warrants a continued presence by UNOMIG in the quest for peace in Georgia.

The Republic of Korea's participation in UNOMIG is an expression of its strong commitment to the United Nations effort to achieve a lasting political settlement in Abkhazia, Georgia, and I take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to this end.

In light of these considerations, my delegation is pleased to vote in favour of the extension of the UNOMIG mandate for an additional six months, ending 12 July 1996, under the stipulations contained in paragraph 11 of the draft resolution.

Before concluding, I would like to stress that throughout its membership in the Security Council, the Republic of Korea, as demonstrated since its fairly recent admission to the United Nations, will be staunchly prepared to make the most meaningful and productive contributions possible towards the realization of the goals enshrined in the Charter, particularly in the field of international peace and security.

The President: I thank the Representative of Korea for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): It gives me great pleasure indeed to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January.

I would also like to ask Ambassador Lavrov to accept the assurances of my delegation's deep appreciation for the excellent manner in which he presided over the Council in December 1995.

The Polish delegation remains concerned over the situation in Abkhazia. It may be concluded, on the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General, including the last one, that the most appropriate words to describe both the substance and the pace of the process of normalization in the area are "deadlock" and "unchanged". Moreover, the continuing acts of human rights violations against the Georgian population, and the recent killings strengthen the view that more efforts are needed to achieve a genuine breakthrough in the situation.

The political aspects of the normalization continue to determine the chances for progress in all other areas. The picture presented in the Secretary-General's latest report is rather a bleak one. We sincerely encourage all parties concerned — and especially the Abkhaz side — to do all they can in order to achieve a comprehensive political solution.

We believe that last year's presidential and parliamentary elections in Georgia, while greatly contributing to the process of democratic evolution in that country, create a more propitious climate for addressing the outstanding issues in the conflict. We refer in particular to President Shevardnadze's comments on the constitutional arrangements in Georgia in his inaugural address.

The humanitarian situation in the conflict area is of particular concern for the delegation of Poland. We regret the lack of positive changes in this regard and call upon all the parties concerned to alleviate the situation — and not just on a temporary basis — in the first place, by committing themselves to full and unequivocal fulfilment of their obligations. Again, our appeal is addressed in particular to the Abkhaz side, which is expected to better its record with regard to the process of return of refugees and displaced persons, as stipulated in the draft.

The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) continues to be an indispensable element of the situation in Abkhazia. That is why we are in favour of the extension of the mandate, although the situation that I referred to earlier in my statement would warrant a cautious approach in the face of further delays in the peace process.

In conclusion, let me extend words of appreciation to the Secretary-General and his envoys to the region for their efforts to resolve the conflict, as well as to the Russian Federation for its assistance as facilitator.

Finally, we wish to pay tribute to the personnel of UNOMIG and its Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) partner in the area.

The President: I thank the representative of Poland for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, allow me, Sir, to join others in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of January and to express the readiness of our delegation to support you in all possible ways in your work.

On behalf of the Russian delegation, I should like to express profound condolences for the tragic death of peaceable inhabitants of the village of Sheshleti on 5 January 1996. We firmly condemn this barbaric crime, and we sincerely hope that the murderers of these peaceable inhabitants, who included women and children, will receive the harshest punishment.

The Russian delegation has actively participated in preparing the draft resolution before us and believes that it is an important document that, along with the extension of the mandate of UNOMIG, contains important political provisions. It reaffirms the dedication of the international community to a settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia through political dialogue on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and to ensuring the rights of the multinational people of that country.

Naturally, we, like the other members of the Security Council, believe that the basic responsibility for ending the crisis through mutually acceptable compromises lies with the parties to the conflict themselves.

The situation of the negotiating process remains complex. No change of position that would allow for progress, particularly by the Abkhaz side, has yet taken place. We believe none the less that the potential for a

peaceful political settlement of the conflict has not yet been exhausted. As the facilitator for the negotiating process under the aegis of the United Nations, Russia has continued its vigorous efforts, in close consultation with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Georgia and his Deputy, to find ways to intensify the negotiating process. We are actively working to encourage the parties to be flexible in their approaches to a settlement.

We very sincerely hope that the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) will contribute positively to a political settlement. The mandate of the CIS peace-keeping forces and the situation in the conflict zone as a whole will be discussed at that meeting.

We are increasingly concerned by the situation regarding the return of refugees and displaced persons. We consider it essential that the comprehensive and safe return of refugees be ensured. The solution of this problem will, to a great extent, determine progress on other problems involved in the settlement of the conflict. In the draft resolution, the Security Council firmly demands that the Abkhaz side accelerate significantly the process of return of refugees and that it guarantee the safety of returnees already in the area and of all persons in areas under its control. The Russian delegation assumes that Sukhumi will respond positively to this firm demand of the Security Council.

We note the draft resolution's positive assessment of cooperation between the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia and the collective CIS peace-keeping forces. We are convinced that the atmosphere of mutual trust and friendly relations that exists between United Nations and CIS peace-keepers is of key significance for the successful continuation of the peace-keeping operation in that region.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me. As he knows, my own appreciation to the outgoing presidency of the Russian Federation was expressed here on an earlier occasion.

Mr. Mano Queta (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): Since this is the first time my delegation has spoken at a formal meeting of the Council, allow me, Sir, to express our sincere congratulations on your accession to the presidency of the Council for this busy month of January. Your presidency coincides with the beginning of the term of my country, Guinea-Bissau, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the first time in its history. Your competence and experience are strong guarantees for the success of our work.

Allow me also to thank Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation for his excellent work during the month of December.

The situation in Georgia continues to deserve the Council's special attention. My delegation therefore wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the report he has submitted. However, we note that despite the efforts made by his Special Envoy and his Deputy to bring Georgia and Abkhazia closer together, the peace process remains deadlocked. We note with regret that resurgent violence, looting and torture in the region of the Gali canal have greatly contributed to the deterioration of the situation of refugees and displaced persons.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, we note that nothing has changed since October 1995 and that, on the contrary, the situation could well worsen. Human rights and the dignity of the human person are constantly being violated. The most recent act of barbarism, in which nine people were brutally murdered, took place on 5 January, again in the Gali region.

Despite the seriousness of the situation, my country, Guinea-Bissau, reaffirms its dedication to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and congratulates the Georgian authorities on the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections last November, which it hopes will facilitate a political settlement of the conflict. We also wish to express our support for the six-month extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), given the very important role that the Mission continues to play.

Since the draft resolution before us fully responds to our concerns, my delegation will vote in favour of it in the hope that it will provide new impetus for strengthening the peace process in that region of the world.

In conclusion, I wish, with your permission, Mr. President, to express our gratitude to the Russian Federation as facilitator and to France as the coordinator of the Friends of Georgia.

The President: I thank the representative of Guinea-Bissau for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you sincerely, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the first month of 1996. I am convinced that, given your outstanding talent and rich diplomatic experience, the work of the Council this month will be a success. I also wish to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, who successfully guided the Council's work in the last month of last year, leading us smoothly into 1996.

We have noted that the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy have made tremendous efforts for the peaceful settlement of the Georgia conflict. The countries concerned in the region, the Russian Federation in particular, have also conducted positive mediation. We welcome the concerted efforts of the international community to advance the peace process in Georgia.

The situation in the Abkhaz region of Georgia has been tense and the political settlement process long stalemated, despite vigorous mediation by all parties, since the outbreak of the dispute in the region. The major problems remain the continued serious differences between the two parties concerned over the future political status of Abkhazia and the further obstruction of the return of refugees to the Abkhaz region. The Chinese delegation is deeply concerned about these disturbing developments.

We have consistently held that the international community should respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia in settling the conflict in that country. At the same time, the basic rights of various ethnic groups in the Abkhaz region should be guaranteed.

We are of the view that the final settlement of the question of Georgia depends, in the final analysis, on Georgians of all ethnic groups. In this connection, the international community can only play a supplementary and promoting role that is based on the political will of the two parties. Therefore, we urge the two parties concerned to take into account the fundamental interests of Georgians of all ethnic groups and to engage in real peace talks, earnestly and constructively, so as to find a final, proper solution.

Since its deployment, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), has maintained good cooperation with the two parties concerned and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force, and it has carried out fairly well the mandate entrusted to it by the Council, at which fact we wish to express our satisfaction. Therefore, we support the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNOMIG, and we hope that it will further promote stability in Georgia and facilitate the process of a comprehensive political settlement.

On the basis of the aforementioned position, the Chinese delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

The President: I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Sriyono (Indonesia): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the duties of the President of the Security Council for the month of January and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation on the many important issues currently before the Council. My delegation is confident that your demonstrated leadership qualities will enable the Council to make substantial progress.

I should also like to extend my congratulations to Ambassador Lavrov and his delegation for the exemplary way in which he presided over the work of the Council in the month of December.

The Indonesian delegation would also like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for submitting the report on which our decision on extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) will be based. We also wish to express our gratitude to the Friends of Georgia for having prepared the draft resolution before us today.

A well-deserved tribute is also due to the personnel of UNOMIG, the peace-keeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Russian Federation for their combined contributions in deterring the further escalation of violence and for encouraging an environment conducive to reaching a political solution between the conflicting parties in Georgia.

The Indonesian delegation, however, is seriously concerned about the current situation in Georgia as it is described in the Secretary-General's report. The protracted yet deadlocked peace process can be understood only in the gravest of terms. My delegation therefore supports the efforts of Ambassador Brunner and

his Deputy, Mr. Bota, along with the efforts of the Russian Federation; they have made a valuable contribution to the peace process. With the prospects of any major breakthrough remaining bleak at this time, my delegation appeals to the parties to refrain from any actions that might exasperate this already dangerous and volatile situation, which is poignantly portrayed in deplorable humanitarian conditions in which looting, beatings and torture have become an intolerable aspect of everyday life for many people. Furthermore, we note that during the current period of UNOMIG's mandate, virtually no progress has been made concerning the serious issue of displaced persons, while at the same time the situation on the ground remains unsettled and tense, placing the peace-keeping forces in harm's way.

It is against this disappointing and frustrating background that my delegation strongly reaffirms the draft resolution's call for the parties to agree, without undue delay, to a framework that reflects the main tenets of this draft resolution for achieving a comprehensive political settlement to the crisis. In particular, we believe that the core elements of such a framework should be based on the premise of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and of the rights of the multi-ethnic people of that country.

My delegation is also of the view that as long as people are forced into eternal submission and deprived of their freedom of movement, enduring peace in Georgia will remain elusive. In this regard, we cannot but express our profound dissatisfaction with the Abkhaz authorities' continued position of intransigence facilitating an atmosphere that encourages the safe repatriation of displaced persons and refugees. In this connection, my delegation would like to recall the eighth preambular paragraph of the declaration of the 1994 CSCE Budapest summit, which condemns in no uncertain terms the use of ethnic violence. We therefore urgently request the Abkhaz authorities to accept the proposed timetable by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which would significantly accelerate the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons. In addition, we call on the Abkhaz authorities to take the appropriate steps to fully cooperate with all relevant institutions assisting in resolving this crisis — including the good offices of the Secretary-General and the Russian Federation — to promote the expeditious and safe return of refugees and displaced persons.

My delegation is hearted and encouraged by the close cooperation established between the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. It is patently clear that their presence has exerted a constructive and stabilizing influence which has prevented another outbreak of uncontrollable hostilities with the attendant consequences. We are pleased to learn that the quadripartite meetings have resumed and that biweekly formal meetings with international and non-governmental organizations relating to areas of mutual concern and security are taking place. We are also encouraged by the additional measures implemented by UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping forces in the Gali region. In this regard, we deem it imperative that the parties live up to their commitments to provide the United Nations and CIS personnel with security and freedom of access so that they can continue to discharge their urgent and important tasks with minimal disruption.

After careful consideration and thought, and in the light of the ominous circumstances that prevail in Georgia, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council today, which extends the UNOMIG mandate for an additional six-month period. We look upon the UNOMIG mission as constituting a vital element in the peace process, especially in the wake of the current polarization of the two parties. Furthermore, it is our conviction that this draft resolution accurately addresses the concerns identified in the Secretary-General's report. We caution, however, that while the draft resolution contains important instrumentalities for achieving a political solution to this crisis, a lasting peace cannot be imposed on the two parties. We therefore stress that the ultimate responsibility for arriving at a peaceful settlement rests with the two parties.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish you every success. You can count on our support. I must also pay tribute to Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for his excellent stewardship of the Council during the month of December.

Since the civil war started in Abkhazia three years ago, the international community has made concerted efforts to find a solution to the constitutional crises in that region of Georgia, but such efforts have been thwarted by the self-declared Government of Abkhazia, which continues to reject proposals for a unitary state. We

sometimes wonder whether Security Council resolutions and presidential statements mean anything to the parties to the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, particularly to Mr. Ardzinba and his forces. The callousness with which the Abkhaz side treats the plight of the 250,000 refugees that they have expelled from their homes is most disheartening, to say the least.

We believe that it is time the Abkhaz authorities took the decisions of the Security Council regarding the peace process in Abkhazia seriously. Botswana believes that a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in Georgia is still possible. The essential elements for such a settlement are already in place, and they include the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons, preservation of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia and a constitutional framework conferring a special status on Abkhazia. These elements have already been accepted by the Government of the Republic of Georgia, and the Abkhaz side should show its commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict by doing likewise.

We are deeply disturbed by the level of violence and ethnic killings in the Gali region. Human rights violations, particularly towards the Georgian population in that region, cannot be allowed to continue with impunity. The Abkhaz authorities have a responsibility for the safety of all peoples in Abkhazia, irrespective of their ethnic origin. It is for this reason that we support the language of operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution before us, which calls upon on the Abkhaz leadership to ensure the protection of all persons in areas under its control.

The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council within the next three months on the efforts of his Special Envoy and the Russian Federation as facilitator to find a solution to the Abkhaz problem. It is our fervent hope that this time substantive progress on both the political and refugee questions will be made so that peace and security can return to Georgia.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my delegation's sincere thanks to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ambassador Brunner, and to the Government of the Russian Federation for their untiring efforts to find a solution to the Georgia-Abkhaz conflict.

The President: I thank the representative of Botswana for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Martínez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are sure that with your vast experience and able guidance the work of the Council will be successful. We also wish to congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Lavrov, and his delegation on the excellent work they did this past December.

The recent report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, and the activities of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) indicates that, generally speaking, no progress has been made in the political negotiations between Georgia and Abkhazia and that the peace process remains at a standstill.

It has not been possible to make any progress in overcoming the differences of the parties over a solution based on a federative state within the borders of Georgia and one based on a union between two equal states. This situation, in our view, adversely affects the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons.

My delegation believes that if the political dialogue between the parties is not resumed soon, the situation could continue to deteriorate, because, as the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in one of his earlier reports,

> "Situations of tense political deadlock prevent the development of the stability and public confidence necessary for economic assistance, reconstruction and a return to normalcy for the persons affected".

We believe that the parties must show that they are prepared to reach immediate agreement on the three sticking points that so far have blocked progress in the peace process: the return of refugees and displaced persons in conditions of safety; an agreement on a special status for Abkhazia; and the preservation of the territorial integrity of Georgia, which is supported by the international community. Accordingly, my delegation believes that the negotiating points formulated by President Shevardnadze and reflected in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General constitute an appropriate basis for the parties to reach a settlement. The parties must also comply with international humanitarian law and cooperate with UNOMIG, the peace-keeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in order to promote and accelerate the return of refugees and displaced persons or to legalize the situation of those

who have already returned, in keeping with the provisions of the Quadripartite Agreement of 4 April 1994.

My delegation believes that the measures taken by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in conjunction with the Government of Georgia and the Abkhaz authorities, with the assistance of the Russian Federation as facilitator and with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, are of the utmost importance in order for the parties to resume negotiations with a view to achieving a broad political settlement of the conflict by means of a mutually acceptable protocol covering a status for Abkhazia within the borders of Georgia. My delegation acknowledges those efforts and fully supports them.

Despite the situation of insecurity and the existing tensions in various areas of the Abkhaz region, especially in Gali, and the restrictions on freedom of movement that continue to be imposed on the personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, UNOMIG continues fully to discharge its mandate and to cooperate satisfactorily with the peace-keeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States and with UNHCR. My delegation believes that so long as no concrete steps are taken towards the restoration of peace and stability in that region of the world, the presence of UNOMIG will be necessary. We agree that the Council should extend UNOMIG's mandate for an additional six-month period and that it should call upon the parties to achieve without delay substantive progress towards a broad political settlement of the conflict in the Abkhaz region.

Accordingly, we will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The President: I thank the representative of Honduras for the kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me, Sir, to begin Egypt's first statement since its admission to membership in the Security Council by expressing our pleasure at seeing you preside over the work of the Council for this month. We are confident that thanks to your well-known diplomatic abilities and wide experience, the Council will conclude its work successfully. Allow me also to express the appreciation of the Egyptian delegation for the exemplary manner in which the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Ambassador Lavrov, conducted the work of the Council last month.

The Egyptian delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution for the following reasons.

First, it is important that the Council always take the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Secondly, we must encourage the parties concerned to reach a political settlement that would preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, with the contribution of the Russian Federation as facilitator, in consultation with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Brunner, and with the resident Deputy, Mr. Bota, and in coordination with the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

It is important for the Council to demand acceptance of a timetable, as the mandate of the monitoring group of monitors will end next June. It is important also for the Council to condemn strongly the killings and violations committed in Abkhazia, and it should request the Abkhaz side to ensure the safety of all persons in areas under its control.

Thirdly, it is important for the Council to request both parties, particularly the Abkhaz side, to accelerate the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons, particularly to the Gali region, according to a timetable based on the proposals made by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Fourthly, both parties must be requested to cooperate fully with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and to facilitate its tasks in creating a safe environment for the return of refugees and displaced persons, including by not obstructing or impeding the movement of the United Nations force, particularly in the inspection of storage sites for heavy weapons.

In view of these considerations, we agree that the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) should be extended for six additional months and that the Council should review this mandate, in case any changes are made in the mandate of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping forces at the forthcoming CIS summit meeting, which is scheduled for 19 January, or at any time before the termination of the UNOMIG mandate.

The draft resolution before us is stricter in tone than Security Council resolution 993 (1995). This is warranted, and the Council must take a firm stance

vis-à-vis the positions repeatedly taken by one party to the conflict — the party which ignores the resolutions of the Council — and must also support sincere efforts to reach a comprehensive political settlement that may achieve peace and stability for both parties.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his kind words addressed to me.

I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/16.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Botswana, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1036 (1996).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): May I begin, as other members of the Council have this afternoon, by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for January. We hope the work of the Council this month will be more tranquil than the weather we are experiencing outside. Under your able and experienced leadership, we have no doubt it will be. You will have our full cooperation in this regard. My delegation would also like to express its appreciation and admiration to Ambassador Lavrov and his delegation for their excellent work during the month of December. Finally, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to express again its sincere welcome to the five new members of the Council. We look forward to working with all of them in the months ahead.

The United States would now like to take this opportunity to express its firm support for the extension of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). UNOMIG has served as a positive element in the international community's efforts to resolve the conflict in Georgia, and the United States is pleased that, through this resolution, UNOMIG will be able to continue operations over the next six months.

The United States deeply regrets the lack of progress between the parties in achieving a political solution to the conflict in Georgia. The resolution adopted today calls upon the parties, in particular the Abkhaz side, to achieve substantive progress without further delay towards a comprehensive political settlement. The Abkhaz side should take note that the Security Council has not wavered in its absolute support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. And yet, broad autonomy is available to the Abkhaz people — with their own parliament, constitution, courts and other state symbols — if they would negotiate within the parameters suggested by Special Envoy Brunner and the Russian Federation.

The Abkhaz-Georgian conflict created a quarter of a million refugees and displaced person. Only an insignificant trickle have returned to their homes. The resolution demands that the Abkhaz side accelerate significantly the voluntary return of the refugees. Moreover, the Council calls upon the Abkhaz, as a first step, to promote the return of refugees and displaced persons to the Gali region, a traditional Georgian area.

The human rights situation in Gali and throughout Abkhazia is of great concern. We support the efforts of Deputy Special Envoy Bota, working in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Ayala Lasso, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to establish a programme for the protection and promotion of human rights in Abkhazia. The pervasive lawlessness and incidents of ethnically based abuse throughout the security zone have had a destabilizing effect. The sort of killings described in the letter from the Ambassador of Georgia, although still under investigation, contribute to this instability and thus discourage the return of refugees and displaced persons.

The United States calls on all parties in Georgia to cooperate with UNOMIG and to allow its personnel to carry out their mission without interference or opposition. UNOMIG can maximize its contribution to bringing peace and stability in Georgia only if it can operate freely and with the cooperation of all parties to the cease-fire it is charged with monitoring.

The resolution just adopted contains a provision allowing the Security Council to review UNOMIG's

mandate if there are changes in the recently expired mandate of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force operating in Georgia; we expect that the mandate of the CIS peace-keeping force will be renewed and that UNOMIG will consequently be able to maintain its operations as contemplated in the resolution. The United States would like to commend the excellent cooperation between UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force and hopes that such cooperation will continue as long as both are operating in Georgia.

The resolution properly recognizes the positive effect of the presidential and parliamentary elections held in Georgia in November 1995, which resulted in the election of Eduard Shevardnadze as President.

Finally, the United States would like to express its appreciation to Special Envoy Brunner and to the Russian Federation, as facilitator, for their efforts and cooperative initiatives in trying to lead the parties to a negotiated settlement and also to resident Deputy Special Envoy Bota, whose fine work has had a positive effect on UNOMIG and its operations.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the representative of France.

Mr. Dejammet (France)(*interpretation from French*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and to congratulate you on the remarkably effective and precise manner in which you have been guiding our work. Allow me also to associate myself with the unanimous tribute which has been paid to your predecessor, Ambassador Lavrov for his effectiveness, celerity, determination and impartiality. Finally, I would like to welcome the five new members of this Council, whose presence among us gives me great pleasure.

The resolution, extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for six months was adopted as a presidential text. The French delegation approves this decision. Indeed, the unanimous support of the Council constitutes a serious message addressed to the parties.

A political solution to the conflict in Abkhazia is indispensable, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia, within its internationally recognized borders. Within that framework, Abkhazia must have an appropriate political status, and arrangements can be envisaged that fully guarantee the rights of the population of Abkhaz origin, in accordance with the highest standards defined by the international community.

Such is the unswerving position of our Council, and it has been determinedly reaffirmed here today.

From that point of view, our urgent appeal to the parties to make progress in the political negotiations as quickly as possible is addressed in particular to the Abkhaz side, which must shoulder its responsibilities and not gamble on one or another unlikely external circumstance in order to cling to its position of rejecting the facts.

The current efforts under United Nations auspices, with the support of the Russian Federation as facilitator, are the best way to reach a peaceful and equitable solution to the conflict that will respect the rights of all the region's populations. It is imperative that this way be pursued.

In another, equally important, area, the Council has attached particular importance to the tragic plight of the refugees and displaced persons. That the Abkhaz side is not respecting its undertakings to facilitate the return of refugees is unacceptable, as is the increased violence in the territories under Abkhaz control, which is aimed at preventing the return of any displaced persons. That is why the Council has used unprecedentedly firm language on these matters. We condemn all such violence and abuses, and we unequivocally recall the responsibilities of the Abkhaz side in the areas under its control.

The Council also demands with great firmness full respect for the commitments made by the Abkhaz side with respect to the return of refugees. Here, developments in the Gali region will test the good will of the Abkhaz side; the Council will follow with special attention the developments in that region, including the support of the parties for the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The establishment of machinery to monitor respect for human rights in the areas under Abkhaz control is another important demand by the Council, which unreservedly supports the efforts made under United Nations auspices. Concrete results must be achieved speedily.

The importance of all these pending tasks justified the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia for six months, subject to parallel changes that may be made in the mandate of the peace-keeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Close cooperation between UNOMIG and those forces is necessary; the French delegation is pleased at the excellence of contacts on the ground, and keenly encourages all initiatives to strengthen them.

France wishes also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the dedication of all the United Nations personnel involved in this difficult mission. We wish finally to express our gratitude and full support for the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Brunner, and his resident Deputy, Ambassador Bota, and for that of the Russian Federation.

The President: I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): This my delegation's first speech at a formal meeting of the Security Council since becoming a non-permanent member of the Council for the period 1996 to 1997. I thank all those representatives who have addressed words of welcome to the new members of the Council.

I wish also to put on record Chile's particular pleasure and complete confidence at seeing you, Sir, guiding the delicate work of the Security Council this month; we have already said this in an informal setting, but wished to reiterate it most emphatically in today's formal meeting. Before becoming a member of the Council we were able to witness the outstanding presidency of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and his delegation last month.

I welcome the presence here of the representative of Georgia and I thank him for his comments today.

We wish to express our complete support for the resolution the Council has just adopted.

We are grateful too for the recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, which is before the Council today.

We believe that, as other delegations have noted, it is deeply disturbing to note that despite the efforts made in recent years the peace process remains bogged down: as the Secretary-General says in his report, it is "at an impasse" (*S/1996/5, para. 40*). We regret even more that the situation on the ground remains tense and unstable, that ethnic killings and human rights violations by Abkhazia continue — the Council condemns these in paragraph 7 of the resolution it has just adopted — and that displaced persons and refugees continue to endure hardship. We condemn also incidents related to restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). Unreserved respect for the laudable work of the "Blue Helmets", for their safety and for their freedom of movement must be preserved under all circumstances.

As we express our concern today at the humanitarian situation and at the situation of refugees, we echo the concern expressed by the Government of Georgia last September during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, when it warned that the harsh conditions endured by more than 300,000 displaced persons scattered throughout the territory of Abkhazia — apart from constituting a heavy burden upon the entire country — are a factor for instability that blocks the consolidation of the peace process.

Thus, aware of the delicate situation in this regard faced by the Republic of Georgia, we wish to express our firm support for the activities of the Special Envoy and his resident Deputy, and for the initiatives of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Ayala Lasso, as well as for the cooperation in this regard of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is developing a programme specifically to deal with these urgent tasks.

We acknowledge and are grateful for the important work carried out in recent years by the United Nations and by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); this has made it possible to contain the conflict, which could otherwise have had even more serious consequences for the entire region. We wish also to stress the special responsibility of the Russian Federation in the matter before the Council today, and to express special thanks for the persistent efforts that country has been making in the search for a solution acceptable to the parties.

Despite the pending problems, we believe that, as the Secretary-General indicates in his report, there are some factors that could give reason for hope and that should enable the parties to overcome the present deadlock in the negotiations between Georgia and Abkhazia. In that connection, President Shevardnadze has

offered Abkhazia a broad political status and its own Constitution compatible with that of the Federal State, in which what he calls the "Republic of Abkhazia" would have its parliament, supreme court, national anthem, state emblem and other symbols. We believe that these factors should be most seriously considered by the Abkhaz party with a view to making progress in the peace process. We hail the willingness of the Government of Georgia to undertake dialogue at all levels and indeed to engage in bilateral negotiations.

Likewise, we are confident that, at meetings to be held in the coming days by the Special Envoy and his resident Deputy with the authorities of the Russian Federation and their colleagues to review the situation and consider how to move forward in the political process, new light will be cast on how to overcome the present stagnation in the peace process.

For all those reasons, the delegation of Chile voted in favour of the draft resolution extending the mandate of United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia for a period of six months, until 12 July 1996.

I wish to thank all United Nations personnel for their outstanding work, and to convey to the Secretary-General our wish that he be so kind as to transmit to the people on the ground the gratitude of my delegation and of the many others who have also expressed such gratitude.

Although the Security Council meets far away from the scene of the events we are discussing today, and although we are not subject to the difficulties faced by the people in the field, I believe it is important that the personnel of the United Nations — civilian and military — should be aware of our solidarity with them and understanding of the difficult tasks and living conditions that they have to face.

The President: I thank the representative of Chile for his kind words addressed to me. The presidency will ensure that his remarks to the credit of the Secretariat are passed on to its members in the absence of their representative.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United Kingdom.

When this Council decided in July 1994 to increase the number of United Nations observers on the ground in Abkhazia on the basis of a significantly expanded mandate, at the same time it made clear the crucial importance of achieving progress towards a comprehensive political settlement. It also made it clear that that settlement was to respect fully the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia. On each and every occasion since then on which this Council has discussed the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, it has reaffirmed the fundamental importance of those two principles. The international community has offered, and continues to offer, help, encouragement, assistance and advice to that end. The United Nations has played the leading role in those efforts and we are grateful for the patient and persistent work of Mr. Brunner and his staff. It is therefore deeply frustrating that 18 months later there has been so little progress towards that goal of a comprehensive political settlement.

But it is difficult to see how political negotiations can flourish in the face of the continued unwillingness of the Abkhaz leadership to face up to reality. The reality is that this Council remains unequivocally committed to Georgian territorial integrity. The reality is that this Council is deeply concerned by the Abkhaz leadership's continued obstruction of the orderly and voluntary return of refugees and its failure to ensure the safety of those who have returned to Abkhazia. And the reality is that the Abkhaz leadership's actions only serve to undermine further the situation of the very people whose interests it claims to represent. We appeal to the parties, but in particular to the Abkhaz leadership, not to squander the opportunity represented by the Cease-fire Agreement of May 1994 and to work urgently and sincerely towards settling a comprehensive political agreement. The Abkhaz leadership should not expect that opportunity to exist forever.

One of the reasons why that opportunity exists at present is the valuable work of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force in helping to stabilize the situation on the ground. Without their efforts, the prospects of securing a comprehensive settlement would be very significantly diminished. That is why the United Kingdom supports the continuation of the presence of United Nations observers in Abkhazia, subject to the continuation of the CIS peace-keeping force. We hope that the CIS summit on 19 January will indeed confirm the extension of the presence of CIS peace-keepers. It is most welcome that cooperation between UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force continues to be satisfactory. The United Kingdom is one of the main contributors of personnel to UNOMIG, and our thanks go to the Chief

Military Observer, Major General Källström, and to the members of UNOMIG for their work. The recent incidents detailed in the Secretary-General's report remind us, however, of the ever present threat to those carrying out this work, and it is vital that the parties recognize their responsibilities to ensure the safety and freedom of movement of UNOMIG and CIS personnel. However, the parties, in particular the Abkhaz leadership, should not forget that UNOMIG's presence is a means to an end, and not an end in itself. That is why it is essential that there be significant progress, both in the political negotiations and on the return of refugees, in the coming months if the international community's efforts are not to be wasted.

I resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3619

Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3619th Meeting

Monday, 15 January 1996, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Sir John Weston	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Germany	Mr. Henze
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Mano Queta
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wibisono
	Italy	Mr. Ferrarin
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in Croatia

96-85051 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Croatia

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Croatia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I have received a request dated 15 January 1996 from Mr. Jovanović to address the Council. With the consent of the Council, I would propose to invite him to address the Council in the course of the discussion of the item before it.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1025 (1995), document S/1995/1028*.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1996/23, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Italy, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America; and document S/1996/24, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following other documents: S/1995/951 and S/1996/13, letters dated 15 November 1995 and 10 January 1996, respectively, from the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council, respectively; and S/1996/21, letter dated 11 January 1996 from the chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The first speaker is the representative of Croatia, on whom I now call.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): At the outset, Sir, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of January.

The first draft resolution now before the Security Council is one of the most important documents the Council has dealt with since the outbreak of the crisis in the area of the former Yugoslavia. This draft resolution sends a loud and clear message to the people in the occupied territories of Croatia. It is a message of hope to the silent majority yearning for peace, and an even louder and final message of "no more" to the belligerent fringe that profited from war and the status quo. For my country, this draft resolution is a reason for satisfaction and confidence. It aims to achieve a goal by means consistent with the objectives of my Government: a peaceful, timely and complete reintegration of the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium with Croatia.

In his recent report (S/1995/1028*) to the Security Council, dated 13 December 1995, the Secretary-General wrote that

> "the purpose of the transitional administration is to achieve a peaceful reintegration of the region into the Croatian constitutional system through the implementation of the basic agreement." *(S/1995/1028*, para. 12)*

The Council, in operative paragraph 11 of the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/23, ratifies this sentence from paragraph 12 as the "objective" of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES). Therefore, my Government understands this draft resolution as an expression of the Council's determination to go beyond passive protection of Croatia's territorial integrity within

its internationally recognized borders and to actively restore — through the work of the Transitional Administrator and UNTAES — Croatian sovereignty to the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium.

Most of the Croatian citizens from this region, both those who are still living there and those living outside the region as displaced persons and refugees, will greet this decision by the Council with joy. They have suffered enough losses from war and enough misery from the status quo. They want to live normal lives again and enjoy all the benefits and opportunities that the peaceful Croatian State can and will offer them.

Without a doubt, the demilitarization aspect of the UNTAES mandate is the most critical element for its success. We believe that demilitarization can be achieved. There might be some resistance to it, particularly in the leadership ranks of the local Serbs, but this can be overcome — first, by creating a programme of second-country resettlements for local occupation leaders and, secondly, through an active role on the part of the Government in Belgrade. This can begin with an immediate withdrawal of Yugoslav regular and paramilitary troops and assets from the region.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) must also move towards recognition of Croatia within its internationally recognized borders, consistent with the Council's calls for such recognition, included in this draft resolution as well. Croatia is prepared to do the same, as demonstrated by my Foreign Minister's recent visit to Belgrade. Mutual recognition offers our two countries numerous benefits and vehicles to successfully resolve all the outstanding issues between us.

My Government firmly supports the nomination of Major-General Jacques Klein as the Transitional Administrator for the region. Croatia will closely cooperate with him and stands ready to provide his mission with any assistance that might be required. In just a short period of time, General Klein has displayed precisely the assertiveness and foresight needed for this type of operation. We cannot support enough his views on the role and impact of economic assistance for confidence-building and reintegration of segregated communities. General Klein will achieve the most that is possible in the region. Frankly, if we are unable to achieve the Council's objective under his guidance, it will probably mean that the objective cannot be achieved peacefully.

The momentum created by the rapid and assertive implementation of the Implementation Force (IFOR) mandate can benefit the demilitarization aspect of the UNTAES mandate. Only determined and timely efforts will produce progress. The IFOR approach can be a lesson for progress. A diverse and nationally balanced force, with the core and command in the hands of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, similar to IFOR in Bosnia, is also more likely to achieve the desired results in Croatia. Therefore, my Government welcomes any form of linkage between UNTAES and IFOR.

I should also like to emphasize the importance of operative paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the draft resolution before us. My Government interprets these paragraphs to mean that the Security Council will terminate the UNTAES mandate if the demilitarization aspect is not achieved, and at any other time in the future if any other significant aspect of the mandate fails to be implemented — especially if 126,000 non-Serb displaced persons and refugees are unable to return to the region in a timely and meaningful manner. We hope that the Council will continue to seek and consider the views of my Government on the question of mandate progress and on other relevant issues, consistent with the right granted to all Member States.

UNTAES will be the third large United Nations operation on Croatian soil in less than five years. My country welcomes once again the Blue Helmets, this time in the sincere hope that this operation will be shorter and more successful than the previous two and, most importantly, casualty-free.

Finally, let me briefly comment on the second draft resolution that is on the Council's agenda today. We support the draft resolution on Prevlaka, and my Government is pleased that the issue of the Prevlaka peninsula is addressed in a separate document. This draft resolution opens a door for establishing a new monitoring arrangement in the area and recognizes that the Prevlaka peninsula is an integral part of Croatia. It also calls on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to recognize the internationally accepted borders of all successor States of the former Yugoslavia, including Croatia's border in the Prevlaka area.

In this regard, my Government emphasizes once again that the question of the Prevlaka peninsula can in no way be considered a border dispute. The delineation and location of the international border in the area is well

known and has been confirmed by the Badinter Commission. Nevertheless, Croatia is ready to continue to explore all possible ways to peacefully resolve existing problems in the area, centred not on Prevlaka, but on the Boka Kotorska harbour in the area. Croatia supports the view that access to the Boka Kotorska harbour in the neighbouring Republic of Montenegro should be harmless.

The President: I thank the representative of Croatia for his words of congratulation addressed to me.

In accordance with the decision taken earlier in the meeting, I now invite Mr. Jovanović to take a place at the Council table and to make a statement.

Mr. Jovanović: At the outset, I wish to express satisfaction at the exemplary fashion in which you, Mr. Ambassador, have discharged the functions of the President of the Security Council during the month of January. I also wish to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Lavrov, for the outstanding manner in which he presided over the Security Council in December.

The conclusion of the Basic Agreement on Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, together with the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina, represents a major step towards the establishment of a lasting and just peace in the territories of the former Yugoslavia. The Basic Agreement provides a solid foundation for full respect for and protection of the Serb people in the region, guaranteeing them peace, freedom and equality. After Dayton, London, Paris, Bonn and Vienna, it is evident that the outstanding questions can be resolved only by peaceful and political means and only if all parties demonstrate willingness to be flexible and readiness to compromise.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia particularly wishes to emphasize that, under the Basic Agreement, the Security Council has undertaken the responsibility to guarantee peace and stability in Eastern Slavonia in the transitional period, which means to ensure the equality of all citizens and the protection of their human rights, including those of the refugees and other persons who, in accordance with the Basic Agreement, choose to return to live in Eastern Slavonia.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia commends the conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General and rightfully expects the United Nations forces to efficiently and impartially contribute to the full implementation of the Agreement. We consider that a sufficient number of soldiers should be dispatched to Eastern Slavonia in order to enable the United Nations to entirely fulfil all the tasks that lie ahead. Should that not be the case, both United Nations credibility and the efficient implementation of the Agreement would be at risk.

In addition to the military part of the operation, the United Nations also has important duties in the field of civilian administration, where the major tasks should be the protection of the civilian population and their human rights, as well as enabling an unimpeded return of the refugees.

The successful implementation of the Agreement should create the necessary conditions for the development of the region and ensure stability, which would eventually generate calm among the citizens.

The transitional authority, enjoying the trust of the population, should take control of and enhance all existing public services and administration. It is imperative that the proportionality of the ethnic structure of the region be maintained in the number of people employed, especially in top management jobs. The principle of proportionality must be respected especially in the police and the judicial system.

It is obvious that the implementation of the Basic Agreement cannot depend solely on the United Nations. The primary responsibility for its full implementation lies with the two sides, which, with the assistance of the Co-Chairmen of the Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and United States representatives, signed this Agreement. They are expected to translate the Agreement into action. Should those two sides, in good faith and mutual agreement, with the help of the international community, fulfil their obligations, that would defuse the situation on the ground and restore confidence and understanding essential for the success of the operation.

In this framework, it is essential that confidence-building measures should be urgently established and the full security of the local population be ensured. Only in this context can the peaceful demilitarization of the region be carried out. The basic precondition for the successful implementation of the Agreement is that the security of the population be fully maintained.

Any departure from the signed Agreement will generate additional tensions and problems, with unforeseeable consequences. Therefore, it should be pointed out that the implementation of this major and

politically significant Agreement, as well as mutual confidence-building, cannot be ensured by non-compliance and gross violations of human rights, sending false signals, destruction of property belonging to the other side, violation of the Security Council resolutions — in short, by embracing behaviour that is unacceptable and contrary to the new spirit of relations prevailing after Dayton and Paris, to which one of the sides very often and easily resorts, with the tacit approval of the major international factors.

We expect that the United Nations peace operation to be established today will be successful and that it will fulfil the tasks set by the Security Council. That would best exemplify the fact that even the greatest problems can be solved peacefully.

Following the signing of the peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the reaching of the Basic Agreement for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, we feel that conditions have been created for the resolution of other outstanding questions in a new atmosphere. One of those issues is certainly Prevlaka.

The dispute over the Prevlaka peninsula is one of the most complex and significant issues in the search for a solution to the crisis in the previous Yugoslavia. It is of particular importance for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, considering that access to the Montenegrin Bay of Boka Kotorska is fully controlled from the Prevlaka peninsula.

In essence, what is at stake is a classic territorial dispute which has been noted as such since Croatia's secession from the previous Yugoslavia, by both the Croatian side and the international community. The Croatian side, in negotiations that took place as early as 1991 with representatives of the Republic of Montenegro, in principle accepted the possibility that the dispute could be resolved through a tripartite exchange of territory between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Bosnian Serbs and Croatia.

The present legal status of the disputed part of territory incorporating the Cape Oštri Rt and a part of the Prevlaka hinterland was regulated by the Joint Declarations of the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the President of the Republic of Croatia of 30 September and 20 October 1992. On that occasion, after having decided to demilitarize Prevlaka, the two sides concurred that the general security of the Boka Kotorska Bay and Dubrovnik would be solved through further negotiations. The Agreement was confirmed by Security Council resolution 779 (1992), by which the United Nations resumed responsibility for monitoring the arrangements agreed to and the observance of the United Nations security regime pending the reaching of a peaceful solution to the contentious issue.

During the peace negotiations in Dayton, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia did its utmost to reach a negotiated solution to the dispute in direct contacts with the representatives of the Republic of Croatia, in the presence of the representatives of the United States. The guarantees concerning the tripartite exchange of territories among the Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the solution of the Prevlaka dispute in favour of the Republic of Montenegro and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which the Republic of Croatia agreed to on that occasion, are known to all participants in the proximity peace talks in Dayton. However, since the Dayton Agreement, the Croatian side has called the agreed arrangements into question in a number of public statements of high-ranking officials of the Republic of Croatia.

Recently, the Republic of Croatia has begun to deny that what is at stake is a territorial dispute on Prevlaka. This is indeed a very strange development, since Croatia has been involved in negotiations or talks with the representatives of the Republic of Montenegro and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for more than four years on this question. The international community nevertheless has noted that there is a territorial dispute; it did so the moment the Security Council decided to deploy the United Nations military observers with the mandate of monitoring the demilitarization.

Considering the sensitivity of this issue, as well as the strategic relevance of the area, we feel that the further presence of the United Nations troops would be the best guarantor, if misunderstandings and new problems are to be avoided.

We commend the Security Council for having decided to accept the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his report of 12 December 1995 and to extend the presence of the United Nations monitors on the Prevlaka pending a mutually acceptable solution. In so doing, the Security Council has demonstrated political wisdom, as well as a sense of reality. This is the best contribution to the strengthening of stability in the region, preventing new and unnecessary problems.

We are confident that the question of Prevlaka can be resolved peacefully, as was the case with many other even more complex issues in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Historical events in Dayton and Paris bear witness to that.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is ready, on the basis of relevant mutual agreements on this question, as well as of Security Council resolutions, to continue to negotiate with Croatia, on condition that the other side approaches the problem in a responsible and conscientious manner. If one seeks the normalization of relations, one should demonstrate wisdom and readiness to overcome problems in a peaceful and negotiated manner, rather than strive to create new ones.

The President: I thank Mr. Jovanović for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to vote on the two draft resolutions before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolutions to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Ferrarin (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as well as Norway, also associate themselves with the content of this statement.

The European Union has always followed with great attention and concern the situation in Eastern Slavonia. The most recent demonstration of this was the Declaration on former Yugoslavia attached to the Conclusions of the European Council of Madrid on 15-16 December 1995, which pointed to the importance of an urgent solution to the problem in Eastern Slavonia for the entire peace process in the region.

This is the thrust of the draft resolution to be adopted today by the Security Council, which follows up the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, signed on 12 November 1995 between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the local Serbian community; establishes a United Nations peace-keeping operation, the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), with both military and civilian components; and defines the mandate for both components. It also reaffirms once again the Council's commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia, emphasizing in this regard that the aforementioned territories are integral parts of the Republic of Croatia, principles that the European Union has firmly and consistently supported.

First of all, it should be pointed out that the mandate described in the draft resolution faithfully reflects the commitments made by the parties in the Basic Agreement. The parties — the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the local Serbian community — are responsible for scrupulously fulfilling these commitments. UNTAES has the task of helping them to face up to this responsibility, overcoming the distrust and rancour provoked by a long and painful conflict. Thus, according to paragraph 7 of today's draft resolution, the parties must cooperate fully with UNTAES. This cooperation is a necessary condition for the success of the operation.

I wish to underline the particular importance of paragraph 12 of the draft resolution, which provides that:

> "UNTAES shall ... monitor the parties' compliance with their commitment ... to respect the highest standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms, promote an atmosphere of confidence among all local residents irrespective of their ethnic origin, monitor and facilitate the demining of territory within the Region, and maintain an active public affairs element". (*S/1996/23, para. 12*)

The observance of these commitments will have a decisive impact on the implementation of the Basic Agreement. In fact, it is an absolute condition for healing the wounds of the past and for allowing the voluntary and free return of refugees and displaced persons — the images of the shelling of Vukovar are still sharp in the memories of the peoples of the European Union — and the continued presence in that territory of the Serbian community and other ethnic groups that have coexisted in that border region for centuries. If these commitments are respected, Eastern Slavonia can become an example of civil and peaceful coexistence — in short, a model for the entire area of the former Yugoslavia, which in recent years has been engulfed by the most tragic conflicts that Europe has witnessed in the past 50 years.

I also wish to underline the importance of paragraph 14, which authorizes Member States to take, at the request of UNTAES, all necessary measures, including close air support, in defence of UNTAES, and, as appropriate, to assist in its withdrawal. The same holds true for paragraph 15, which requests that UNTAES and the multinational implementation force (IFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina cooperate with each other as well as with the High Representative, acknowledging the close relationship that exists between the two theatres of operation. In our view, these are two essential measures to guarantee the security of UNTAES personnel, preventing the repetition of incidents that have taken place in recent years in former Yugoslavia, causing the deaths of peace-keepers, and that are incompatible with the dignity and credibility of the United Nations and must be avoided at all costs.

Paragraphs 20 and 21 provide that Member States and UNTAES shall cooperate with the International Tribunal in the performance of its mandate. The legacy of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia can only be overcome if justice is done and if the Tribunal can perform its functions with the greatest freedom and the maximum cooperation of all.

The European Union welcomes today's simultaneous adoption of a technical draft resolution that authorizes the United Nations military observers to continue monitoring the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula in accordance with the report of the Secretary-General of 13 December 1995. The continued presence of the United Nations observers on the peninsula is essential to prevent an increase in tensions there and for the success of the talks currently under way between the Governments of the Republic of Croatia and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for a settlement that would peacefully resolve their differences.

Today's draft resolution on Eastern Slavonia constitutes, in the opinion of the European Union, an important stage of the peace process in the area of the former Yugoslavia — a process that now allows us to look at the future of that region with greater confidence and optimism. The European Union urges the Secretary-General to ensure the earliest deployment of the new peace-keeping operation in Eastern Slavonia, in order to facilitate the full implementation of the Basic Agreement, and calls on Member States to act accordingly. We are confident that this new peace-keeping operation will prevent the rekindling of a conflict that could risk having negative repercussions on the still fragile Bosnian peace and generating a new mass exodus of refugees and displaced persons.

Only the consolidation of peace in Eastern Slavonia and its gradual and peaceful reintegration into the political, economic and administrative system of Croatia can promote the development and economic reconstruction of that region, a goal to which all States and international financial institutions are invited to actively contribute in paragraph 18 of today's draft resolution. In this context, the European Union is ready to assume an important role, without losing sight of the relationship, underlined by paragraph 19 of the draft resolution, between the fulfilment by the parties of their commitments in the Basic Agreement and the readiness of the international community to commit financial resources for reconstruction and development.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Security Council is meeting today to approve the operational aspects of the creation of a transitional administration encompassing a transitional peace-keeping force in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium of 12 November 1995. We are also meeting to renew the mandate of the United Nations military observers in the Prevlaka peninsula.

Let me begin by saying that my delegation will vote in favour of both draft resolutions.

As to the first question before the Council, I wish to reaffirm Egypt's full support for this historic Agreement, which will ensure the peaceful integration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into Croatia. It also serves a number of important objectives, including the return of displaced persons to their homes and the elimination of one obstacle to mutual recognition between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

My delegation has carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) and his proposals relating to a peace-keeping force within the Transitional Administration. We have also heard the report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, General Klein, who referred to the intention of all parties to implement the Basic Agreement in good faith. These are all encouraging signs for the establishment of the Transitional Administration in accordance with draft resolution S/1996/23.

My delegation wishes, however, to stress a number of points. The first is the need to show the utmost flexibility in implementing the provisions of the draft resolution, particularly when determining the size of the military component of the United Nations Transitional Administration, by giving the Transitional Administrator the opportunity to propose an increase in the size of that component when he reports to the Secretary-General in the framework of paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, or in any subsequent report.

It is important to interpret paragraph 14 of draft resolution S/1996/23 as encompassing, *inter alia*, intervention by the multinational Implementation Force authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 1031 (1995) to defend UNTAES should the Administration so request.

With respect to paragraph 21 of the draft resolution, cooperation between UNTAES and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia should be comprehensive, with a view to arresting those indicted by the Tribunal and handing them over for trial through official channels and in accordance with international legal norms.

The success of UNTAES in carrying out the mission defined in today's draft resolution will depend on the commitment of all parties to implementing in good faith the Basic Agreement — and implementing in good faith the provisions of the draft resolution, which will facilitate the establishment of UNTAES and the commencement of its operations to restore stability and security in the region as soon as possible.

The United Nations will bear a major responsibility under this draft resolution: the creation of the military component of UNTAES. We note that States have thus far been hesitant about contributing troops to that component. The Secretary-General and the Transitional Administrator should therefore make further efforts to urge States to contribute troops to this most important peace-keeping operation so as to make it possible to begin the implementation of the remaining provisions of the draft resolution as soon as possible, particularly the provisions relating to demilitarization.

In this context, Egypt stresses the need to achieve the greatest possible balance between participation in the UNTAES military component by States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the one hand and non-NATO States on the other. This would authenticate the international nature of the force.

Let me note an error in the Arabic text of this draft resolution: the words "initial deployment" are missing from paragraph 10 in the Arabic text. I trust that this error will be rectified.

I turn now to draft resolution S/1996/24, the technical draft resolution on the renewal of the mandate of United Nations military observers in the Prevlaka peninsula to monitor the demilitarization of that peninsula. We look forward to negotiations between the parties yielding an agreement on a peaceful settlement, so that the Security Council will not be obliged to renew the mandate of the observers once again or to entrust the monitoring mission to another international organization. My delegation hopes that the Security Council will meet soon to adopt an agreement that will settle this problem and will join the series of other agreements towards peace and stability in the Balkans that are now being implemented.

The President: I assure the representative of Egypt that the infelicity in the Arabic text will be addressed.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: In seeking a solution to the question of Croatia, we have always emphasized respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia and have reiterated that the territories of Eastern Slavonia and other areas are integral parts of the Republic of Croatia. Ultimately, an appropriate and lasting solution to the conflict in Croatia can be found only through peaceful negotiations.

Towards the end of last year, the two parties concerned in Croatia signed the Basic Agreement, which opened up new prospects for the peaceful settlement of conflicts and for the gradual reintegration of the territories of Eastern Slavonia and other areas into the Republic of Croatia, within its constitutional jurisdiction. We welcome this development.

Well begun is half done. We hope that the two parties concerned will put the interests of Croatian people of all ethnic origins above their differences, adopt a constructive approach, build mutual trust and implement the Basic Agreement in earnest so as to create conditions favourable for advancing the process of achieving a political settlement of the question of Croatia.

We have noted that the Basic Agreement called for the establishment of a transitional administration and a peace-keeping force in Eastern Slavonia. Considering the urgent needs of the parties concerned in Croatia and considering that the United Nations should do all it can to support the process of a political settlement in Croatia, we will give positive consideration to the requests made in the Basic Agreement and will vote in favour of the two draft resolutions before us. However, we also believe that political will and cooperation on the part of the parties concerned is a prerequisite for any United Nations peace-keeping operation and the basis for its success. We therefore urge the two parties concerned to cooperate closely with the international community in implementing the Basic Agreement so as to ensure the success of the United Nations peace-keeping operation to be deployed. I also wish to point out that the main task of the Transitional Administration will be to assist the parties concerned in implementing the Basic Agreement, and its activities should therefore be strictly restricted to what is requested in the Basic Agreement.

When it comes to the deployment of United Nations peace-keeping operations, we are never in favour of enforcement action under Chapter VII of the Charter. As the two Croatian parties have explicitly pledged their cooperation, the military component of the Transitional Administration will be engaged mainly in monitoring and assisting demilitarization. Under these circumstances, it is not necessary to invoke Chapter VII in the authorization.

Moreover, the use of close air support, as appropriate, in the case of insufficient manpower in peace-keeping operations should be limited to self-defence. Peace-keeping forces should not use force indiscriminately, still less employ it as a means of retaliation. The Transitional Administrator should exercise caution when making such requests.

Therefore, the Chinese delegation wishes to reiterate its reservations about those elements of draft resolution S/1996/23.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): The Security Council has before it today two draft resolutions. The first relates to the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium reached by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the local Serbian community on 12 November 1995. The second concerns the continued monitoring of the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula by United Nations military observers.

The Security Council's consideration of the draft resolution on the Basic Agreement represents the culmination of weeks of intensive work and consultations. In this endeavour, we have benefited enormously from the observations and recommendations of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, for which my delegation is especially grateful.

There can be little doubt about the complexity of the task that has been entrusted to the Council by the Basic Agreement. The apparent generality of some of its provisions has posed a particular challenge, since the Council must be devoid of any ambiguity in implementing this Agreement.

It is in this perspective that the Indonesian delegation has examined the draft resolution, in particular those parts relating to the mandate of the military and civilian components of the prospective United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) and the relationship between UNTAES and the multinational implementation force (IFOR).

The fulfilment of the mandate of the military component of UNTAES — namely, supervising and facilitating the demilitarization; contributing to the maintenance of peace and security in the region; and facilitating and monitoring the voluntary and safe return of refugees — will not, of course, be without challenges. The Indonesian delegation is confident, however, of the operation's ability to effectively overcome them. We should like to underline in particular that the draft resolution provides for the Council's reconsideration of the mandate if at any time it receives a report from the Secretary-General that the parties have significantly failed to comply with the terms of the Basic Agreement. We deem this to be important not only because it provides the Council with the flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, but also because it underscores the message to the parties concerned of the need for their strict and scrupulous compliance with the Agreement.

My delegation is pleased to note the attention given in this draft resolution to the civilian component of the UNTAES mission. We firmly believe that if peace is to have a reasonable chance to take hold after hostilities have ceased, a great deal of effort needs to be directed towards the fulfilment of the mandate, as laid down in operative paragraph 11 of the draft resolution. Moreover, we should like to reiterate the call on States and international financial institutions to support and

cooperate in the development and economic reconstruction of the region.

The manpower and resources accorded to UNTAES must be commensurate with the tasks it is expected to perform. In this regard, the Indonesian delegation supports the initial deployment of up to 5,000 troops to the military component of UNTAES. We should like to underline, however, the import of the provision within the draft resolution that Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, may, at the request of UNTAES and on the basis of procedures communicated to the United Nations, take all necessary measures, including close air support, in defence of UNTAES and, as appropriate, to assist in its withdrawal. Such a broad formulation clearly includes IFOR assistance to UNTAES when this is requested. This is even more apparent in the context of the contents of operative paragraph 15, which, *inter alia*, requests that

> "UNTAES and the multinational implementation force (IFOR) authorized by the Council in resolution 1031 (1995) of 15 December 1995 cooperate, as appropriate, with each other".

It is our understanding that this also covers the arrangements mentioned in operative paragraph 14, and thus provides a solid foundation for cooperation between IFOR and UNTAES. Although these are two separate operations, there is little doubt that the success, or failure, of one will have an impact upon the other.

My delegation dwelt on the contents of operative paragraphs 14 and 15, for it is our view that they are indeed the minimum required to help ensure that the unfortunate recent experience of the United Nations forces in the former Yugoslavia is not repeated. At the same time, my delegation is cautiously optimistic that this rather sombre scenario may be averted. The very signing of the Basic Agreement and the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina have by themselves dramatically transformed the regional milieu. The parties to the conflict have indeed crossed a major chasm. Any party that, in an act of folly, chose to violate these agreements would quickly find itself subject to the wrath of the entire international community. Above all, it would be acting in defiance of the wishes of those whom it leads: the ordinary people, those who have suffered the most from the senseless violence and whose primary wish is economic reconstruction and development.

The Basic Agreement represents a crucial and significant step towards establishing a framework for the political settlement of a crisis that has inflicted so much pain and hardship on countless innocent and defenceless people over the course of the past four years. In our view, the draft resolution is consistent with the fundamental objectives of the Basic Agreement, namely, the full protection of the rights of all in the region and the affirmation that the territories concerned constitute integral parts of the Republic of Croatia. The full implementation of this Agreement is indeed critical to the overall success of the entire peace process. The draft resolution before the Council today lays a solid foundation upon which to build the edifice of a lasting and durable peace in the region, and, indeed, constitutes an integral part of the comprehensive political settlement of the conflict that has engulfed much of the former Yugoslavia. It must none the less be emphasized that the ultimate responsibility for the full implementation of the Basic Agreement rests with the parties concerned. It is up to them to recognize the futility of prolonged conflict and to chart a course in the interests of regional peace and international security.

The delegation of Indonesia endorses the continuation of the monitoring of the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula by United Nations military observers. We value highly the contribution that the observers have made to reducing tensions in the area, and we should like to echo the need for the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to agree on a settlement that would peacefully resolve their differences.

In view of these considerations, the delegation of Indonesia will vote in favour of the two draft resolutions.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation, together with the other member States of the Contact Group, is a co-sponsor of the draft resolution before the Security Council, which sets up the implementation machinery for the Basic Agreement on Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. The signing of the Basic Agreement has paved the way for a peace settlement in this part of Croatia that takes due account of the rights and interests of the local Serbs, who constitute a significant proportion of the population. In this way, it has been possible to create conditions to prevent a recurrence of a scenario involving the use of force, which would be fraught with the danger of destabilizing the situation in the region and of giving rise to new mass flows of refugees.

Having consistently favoured a United Nations format for the operation in Eastern Slavonia, we are very pleased to note that this approach has prevailed generally in the Security Council. Consequently, we have been able to come up with a balanced draft resolution which takes due account of the interests and concerns of the parties.

It seems to us that the civilian and military components of the forthcoming operation will complement each other and that they are being given appropriate mandates to perform the tasks deriving from the Basic Agreement. The Basic Agreement provides for restoring the security guarantees of the entire population of the region, which were disrupted during the years of the conflict, as well as looking out for basic human rights and conditions for the return of refugees and the normalization of community life as a whole, which places a very serious responsibility on the shoulders of the Transitional Administration.

We have learned from the Yugoslav crisis that a lack of thoroughness in this particular area results in additional humanitarian setbacks. Even now we can see that in Sarajevo, another region of the former Yugoslavia that has been a traditional bone of contention, there are initial signs of an exodus of the Serbian population. Every effort should be made to prevent such a turn of events in the former Sector East. The situation in that part of Croatia should be carefully monitored by the Security Council so that it can, if necessary, promptly consider any further steps to fully implement the provisions of the current draft resolution.

In a broader context, the settlement of the situation in Eastern Slavonia should create the necessary conditions for a complete normalization of relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia. This will be of decisive significance for a comprehensive settlement of the Yugoslav crisis.

The Russian delegation supports the extension of the mandate of the group of military observers of the United Nations on the Prevlaka peninsula in accordance with Security Council resolutions 779 (1992) and resolution 981 (1995) and with the relevant sections of the Secretary-General's report (S/1995/1028*) dated 13 December 1995. We welcome the intentions expressed by the parties regarding the demilitarization of that territory, which will help to create an atmosphere of mutual trust in the region and will also create conditions for them to achieve a final settlement of outstanding disagreements.

In this context, the draft resolution, which has been presented by the President of the Security Council, is an appropriate reflection of the situation as it now exists. The Russian delegation believes that the Security Council will take a final position on its further activities in this area after the Secretary-General, in accordance with operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, has submitted his report on the situation in the peninsula and on the progress achieved by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia in their bilateral negotiations.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: During the past few years, Chile has been following with close attention and great concern the results of the conflict in the territories of the former Yugoslavia. We have not been untouched, in spite of the geographic distance separating us from the Balkan region, by the pain and tragedy suffered by so many human beings, the victims of a war that is often cruel and always senseless.

Today the international community, as never before in this long process of constantly seeking a negotiated political settlement, takes hope that these many years of suffering will fade into the past. Last November we celebrated when the parties reached a General Framework Agreement for Peace in Dayton as well as the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, which is the subject that has brought the Council together today. Politically, the two Agreements are part of the same process. We support the continued verification of the demilitarization process on the Prevlaka peninsula, and we therefore support the adoption today of the draft resolution on this subject.

My delegation would like to pay a sincere tribute to the representatives of the Secretary-General and of the European Union, who have worked so hard for years in the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, to the negotiators of the Agreements just mentioned, to the humanitarian organizations and particularly to the Blue Helmets and the diplomats who have given their lives in the noble cause of peace.

In supporting this draft resolution of the Security Council, Chile welcomes the shifting of the focus of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia from the military realm to the realm of political negotiation. As so often in the past, Governments and the parties involved will do their calculations and determine how successful they were in the negotiations, what they won and what they lost. Only time will tell whether the understandings reached are

sound and honourable. What is clear even now is that there is already a big loser in this whole tragic story — the peoples of the territories involved. The daily lives of thousands upon thousands of families and communities have been shattered, often irreparably. Today in many parts of these regions the agreements notwithstanding, fear, distrust and sadness still reign. Normal life still seems very far away. It takes a great injection of hope for anyone to think positively about the future.

In this connection, it might be useful to assign the World Health Organization (WHO) the task of dealing with the frame of mind and the psychological state of the residents of the region who have been most affected, in order to help them overcome their own deep-seated doubts and strengthen their ability to get along with those who only yesterday were their enemies.

The draft resolution we are going to adopt has importance beyond political and military considerations. It is an effort by the United Nations to help restore normalcy and to create conditions of greater security, greater trust and greater happiness for the entire natural population of Eastern Slavonia. The United Nations goes there at the request of the parties to administer the territory during the transitional period, while the Agreements are being fully implemented. In theory, the scene is set for a successful intervention. Therefore, there is no reason to refuse. In practice, however, it is not advisable to respond affirmatively without making a few comments.

The recent history of the region as a whole is well known. Agreements have not been implemented and, most especially, a lack of respect has been shown for members of the United Nations by the very parties who are today demanding their presence. The success of this provisional administration which is being assigned to the United Nations will depend first and foremost on the leadership qualities, on sensitivity and character of the person and the team that discharge this task. Success will also depend on the credibility of the practical means made available to them for the implementation of the task. I believe that in the implementation of these responsibilities, lessons learned in Namibia and Cambodia will be very useful.

In the last analysis, real and lasting success will depend on the parties concerned. It will depend on their good faith, their mutual trust and their ability to think about the lives of people more than about grand strategic schemes. For this reason, this draft resolution appeals to the parties to continue to take confidence-building measures and make good will gestures and to take small and great steps towards reconciliation. These are practical ways to show their willingness to implement fully the Agreements. The reports we have received from the representatives of the Secretary-General are positive in this regard.

In this respect, we welcome measures conducive to the implementation of the Basic Agreement as regards demilitarization, assistance to and return of refugees in conditions of security and the need to guarantee the lasting right of minorities to live in the area and of their right to recover their property or to receive compensation when property cannot be returned.

My delegation believes that the draft resolution before us contains the necessary elements and characteristics to allow for a successful deployment of the peace-keeping operation.

We believe it is necessary to take into due account on this occasion the harsh experiences of the military forces of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in what were until recently called the "safe areas" of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to draw from those experiences the right conclusions. In this respect, we believe that an adequate, well-equipped military contingent, in Eastern Slavonia, meeting the requirement of deterrence, will make the people of the region feel secure while also avoiding exposure of the peace-keeping forces to unnecessary risks.

The effectiveness of the operation will also depend on the support received by the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) in the event of difficulties, as spelt out in operative paragraph 14, which states that

> "Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, may, at the request of UNTAES and on the basis of procedures communicated to the United Nations, take all necessary measures, including close air support, in defence of UNTAES, and, as appropriate, to assist in the withdrawal of UNTAES". (S/1996/23, para. 14)

This authorization should be used decisively, but also cautiously, with emphasis on its defensive character.

We agree with the statement in the Secretary-General's report that this new peace-keeping operation is complex and difficult. For this reason, we believe that the proposed safeguard measures are appropriate and that the cooperation of the multinational Implementation Force (IFOR), authorized by Security Council resolution 1031 (1995), is essential. We believe that the success of the tasks carried out by IFOR in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is closely linked to the tasks that UNTAES should carry out. That, in its turn is closely linked to the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel in this peace-keeping operation, which must be guaranteed at all times by the parties. In this draft resolution, the Security Council provides in operative paragraph 13 that Croatia should include UNTAES and the United Nations Liaison Office in Zagreb in the present Status of Forces Agreement with the United Nations.

We also believe it is essential that the demilitarization process be fully carried out in accordance with the timetable laid out in the Agreement and that the transition force should therefore be deployed without delay.

While it is true that the military aspects of the operation being established today are essential, they are but one component of the main task to be carried out by the Transitional Administration, whose purpose is to achieve the peaceful reintegration of the region into the constitutional system of Croatia through the implementation of the Basic Agreement.

Among the tasks assigned to the civil component of UNTAES, my delegation ascribes a fundamental role to efforts to promote economic development and the speedy reconstruction of the region. In this regard, we appreciate the role that the financial institutions and international cooperators are called upon to play in the normalization of the activities of the people, as well as in the creation of a climate of stability and confidence.

My delegation wishes to highlight the importance it attaches to full cooperation with the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, as provided in paragraph 20 of the draft resolution.

In adopting this draft resolution, we cannot forget the large total of still unpaid contributions for other peace-keeping operations and the new costs implied in this operation. The Security Council's actions must be politically effective, but also financially responsible. This issue, although it is not the direct responsibility of the Council, is in the background and cannot be disregarded. For this reason, Croatia can make a very important contribution to a process whose final result is of great interest to it.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate the urgency and importance of the parties' creating the climate of confidence necessary for peaceful reintegration of the region of Eastern Slavonia into the Republic of Croatia, in accordance with the timetable laid down in the Agreement.

Mr. Martínez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution on Eastern Slavonia because it believes that effective implementation of the Basic Agreement of 12 November 1995 is essential for the reintegration of Croatia's Sector East, the reduction of tensions between the parties and the promotion of peace prospects. This would eliminate the possibility of the resumption of a struggle threatening serious consequences for the region as a whole. Furthermore, we believe that implementation of this Agreement is important for mutual recognition between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The tasks listed for implementation of the Basic Agreement are difficult. With regard to security, the plan is to generate the necessary confidence between the parties, demilitarize the region and monitor the voluntary and safe return of refugees and displaced persons. In the civil area, it is to reintegrate the region to the judicial and constitutional system of Croatia. This involves police training, respect for human rights, facilitating the return of refugees, the organization of elections and other measures designed to promote confidence and reconciliation. The tasks to be carried out by the military and civilian components of the new peace-keeping operation — the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) — are, therefore, difficult and complex. We believe that the success of the operation will largely depend on the parties' cooperation. We urge them, therefore, to support UNTAES and faithfully observe all their commitments under the Basic Agreement.

As regards the situation in the Prevlaka peninsula, we believe that the continued presence of United Nations military observers will continue to contribute to the demilitarization process, and thus to the reduction of tension. We will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution authorizing their presence in the region for three more months. We hope that the Republic of Croatia

and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will continue in good faith to seek an agreement that will resolve their differences in a peaceful way.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the members of the Contact Group to provide the framework for the two draft resolutions now before us.

With respect to the draft resolution concerning the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), of which the Republic of Korea is pleased to be a sponsor, my delegation would like to touch upon several points to which we attach particular importance.

First, in the light of the interrelated nature of the situations in Eastern Slavonia, Bosnia and other regions of the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations operation in Eastern Slavonia must be undertaken in the broader context of peace and security for the region as a whole. We are aware that the operation in Eastern Slavonia and the one currently under way in Bosnia and Herzegovina affect each other. In this regard, we note with satisfaction that, despite some misgivings over the new international operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation there appears to be unfolding in a relatively peaceful manner thus far. This positive development augurs well for the stability of the peace process in Eastern Slavonia.

In this connection, we are pleased with the establishment, through this draft resolution, of a close relationship between UNTAES and the Implementation Force (IFOR). In particular, we believe that IFOR should be one of the key players in maintaining the security of UNTAES personnel.

Secondly, my delegation is of the strong view that any individual who has committed crimes against humanity must be brought to justice. We note that UNTAES will be the sole governing authority in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium during the transitional period and that, in accordance with the provisions of this draft resolution and the Statute of the International Tribunal, it therefore has the authority to deal with war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia.

Thirdly, my delegation fully supports the principles that underlie the Basic Agreement: the territorial integrity of Croatia, the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the entire population, irrespective of ethnic origin, and peaceful coexistence in Eastern Slavonia. We wish to emphasize that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly those of the minorities in the region, is a crucial factor for progress towards a lasting peace.

Fourthly, we also fully support the importance this draft resolution attaches to the development and economic reconstruction of Eastern Slavonia. We are of the view that peace and development will go hand in hand in the long run.

Finally, we firmly believe that the success or failure of the peace process in Eastern Slavonia rests squarely with the parties to the Basic Agreement. While they are clearly assured of the support of UNTAES and the entire international community, it will be only through their political will and untiring efforts to reconcile and rebuild a harmonious multi-ethnic society that real progress can be achieved over the long term.

I should now like to turn to the other, technical draft resolution before the Council. We are well aware that the situation on the Prevlaka peninsula and the issues related to it are among the key elements in the basic relations between the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. For this reason, my delegation expresses its support for the continued deployment of United Nations military observers to the area in the belief that such a measure will contribute to the stability of the peninsula, thus providing a basis upon which the parties concerned can work towards a peaceful settlement of their differences.

In the light of the foregoing, the Republic of Korea will vote in favour of the two draft resolutions before us today.

I wish to conclude by saying that my delegation very much looks forward to a time when the citizens of Eastern Slavonia and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia can put behind them the pain and suffering of the last four years and begin to rebuild their lives and communities in a spirit of mutual trust and reconciliation.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to pay high tribute to the personnel of the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO), without whose sacrifices and dedication the peace process now taking shape in the former Yugoslavia would not have been possible.

Mr. Mano Queta (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): For Guinea-Bissau, the Basic Agreement on Eastern Slavonia, signed on 12 November 1995, represents a major step towards the reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into the Republic of Croatia.

Nevertheless, the Agreement will come into force only after the Council adopts the draft resolution before us, which, *inter alia*, establishes a Transitional Administration and authorizes the deployment of an international force during the transitional period, as provided by the Agreement and requested by the parties.

The establishment for an initial 12-month period of a major operation with a significant military contingent could, in our opinion, not only foster mutual trust and discourage any thoughts of outside interference, but also, generally speaking, ensure security throughout the region during the transitional period and oversee the demilitarization process.

My country, Guinea-Bissau, therefore will welcome with optimism the adoption of the draft resolution before us, which is aimed essentially at guaranteeing a just and lasting peace for all the inhabitants of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, thus making it possible for that region to become an example of peaceful coexistence between the various ethnic and cultural groups of the former Yugoslavia.

None of this will be possible, however, if the parties do not strictly abide by the commitments under the agreements they signed and cooperate fully with the Transitional Administration and all those institutions and agencies participating in activities for the implementation of the Basic Agreement, in accordance with the mandate of that Administration.

As for the Prevlaka peninsula, my delegation believes that the United Nations military observers should continue to monitor demilitarization in the area, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Secretary-General's report of 13 December 1995, for a period of three months, with the possibility of an extension for an additional period of three months.

We wish to express our appreciation for the role played by the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and particularly the United Nations in the process under discussion. We wish to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General of our Organization for the excellent report he has submitted and for his personal dedication to the matter under consideration. Guinea-Bissau will thus vote in favour of the two draft resolutions before the Council.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): The delegation of Botswana believes a negotiated settlement is always possible in any political conflict. We are therefore delighted that reason has ultimately prevailed in Eastern Slavonia, where the Croatian Government and the local Serb authorities have abandoned the logic of war in favour of a political solution. The key to lasting peace in that region now lies with the full implementation of the Basic Agreement, within the time limits set therein. It is imperative that the parties strictly adhere to the commitments they have entered into, including by creating conditions of trust and confidence among all the ethnic groups in Eastern Slavonia. In this connection, it is crucial for the parties to respect fully the cease-fire and enable the demilitarization process to proceed as planned.

The Security Council has two principal tasks under the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, signed on 12 November 1995: to create a transitional administration for the region and to establish a peace implementation force. Draft resolution S/1996/23 would do just that. It would establish a United Nations peace-keeping operation to be known as the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), consisting of both military and civilian components. Thus, following the adoption of that draft resolution the Security Council will have fulfilled its obligation under the Basic Agreement. It will be up to the parties to fulfil their end of the deal. The recent announcement by the parties to the conflict that they will respect the authority of the United Nations was therefore a welcome development. The relative decline in the level of military activity in the region following the signing of the Basic Agreement has given us reason for cautious optimism, and it is for that reason that we support the establishment of a United Nations operation there. We are not, however, unaware of the poor record of both parties in honouring previous agreements.

The parties should realize that UNTAES is being established to help them implement their own agreement, not to force them to do so. Its mandate as spelled out in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the draft resolution conforms strictly to the limits and scope of the Basic Agreement signed by both parties. It is therefore clear that UNTAES will be doomed to failure without the cooperation of the Government of Croatia and the local Serb authorities. It

should also be very clear to the parties that the humiliation to which United Nations personnel were regularly subjected in neighbouring Bosnia, in the former Sectors West, North and South, and in the region of Eastern Slavonia itself in the recent past will not be tolerated.

The Secretary-General suggested in his report that the Council should authorize a force large enough to protect itself and other United Nations personnel, in view of past experience in former Yugoslavia. The caucus of the Non-Aligned Movement worked with the sponsors of the draft resolution in an effort to ensure that a credible United Nations presence able to respond to any situation in the most robust manner would be established. Although the initial troop deployment will be less than what the Secretary-General had proposed, we fervently hope that paragraphs 13 and 14 of draft resolution S/1996/23 will provide, as we are assured they will by the authors of the text, an effective safeguard of the safety and security of UNTAES. In other words, we hope that these two paragraphs will make it clear enough that the multinational Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina will have full authority to deter any attacks against UNTAES.

The question of human rights is one of the most important elements in the peace process in Eastern Slavonia, as it is in Croatia as a whole. The continuing violations of the human rights of the Serb population in the former Sectors North and South are, to put it mildly, unhelpful to the peace process in Croatia. We call upon the Croatian Government to institute the necessary guarantees of full respect of the rights of the Serb population in Croatia and to create conditions suitable for the safe return of the refugees.

In the final analysis, it is clear that the successful implementation of the Basic Agreement will depend on the safety of and respect for United Nations personnel. It will depend on recourse to political dialogue by the parties in Eastern Slavonia and the surrounding areas, and on the creation of conditions of trust and confidence among all the ethnic groups not only in Eastern Slavonia but in the whole territory of Croatia.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): At the outset, let me remind the members of the Security Council that the Polish delegation associates itself with the statement delivered today by the delegation of Italy on behalf of the presidency of the European Union. Let me, however, take this opportunity to comment briefly on certain issues under consideration by the Security Council.

After years of destructive struggle, marked by the unspeakable suffering of so many people, a real chance to end the conflict on the territory of the former Yugoslavia is finally in sight. The appropriate conclusions have been drawn from this bitter lesson of history.

Having authorized the multinational Implementation Force (IFOR) to deal with the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Security Council now turns to another area of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia: the situation in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. With regard to the situation there, we hope that the will displayed by the parties to the Basic Agreement will last and will contribute to peace and stability.

The Polish delegation notes with satisfaction that the underlying idea of the Basic Agreement is the peaceful settlement of the conflict. Poland has always advocated a peaceful solution of the conflict in this area. May I recall at this point the participation of Polish soldiers in the United Nations peace-keeping operation in Croatia, which is being brought to an end today. We believe that their efforts, along with the work of their fellow peace-keepers, were instrumental in reaching the point where a new operation has been made feasible. In the future too, Poland will try to find the means to support a new peace-keeping operation.

My delegation attaches equal importance to the military and the civilian components of the new peace-keeping operation. Draft resolution S/1996/23, on which the Security Council will soon take action, defines mandates for both of these components with sufficient clarity and in the necessary detail.

In the view of the Polish delegation, it is worth stressing that the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) alone will not be in a position to achieve the final solution of the conflict in the area unless both sides to the conflict cooperate with each other and with the peace-keeping forces. This cooperation will be crucial for virtually every aspect of the implementation of the Basic Agreement. Let me emphasize in this regard the importance of disarmament, as stipulated in the Dayton Agreement as well as in the draft resolution. With regard to the civilian part of the mandate, I would like to point out the significance of the harmonious reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into the Republic of Croatia. The economic development of Eastern Slavonia will greatly

contribute to the achievement of this goal, as well as to normalization in the region.

We are pleased to note that the results of the recent visit of the Croatian Foreign Minister to Belgrade have created a better environment for advancing the economic reconstruction of Eastern Slavonia and of the whole area.

I would like briefly to address another important issue that the region is facing today, namely the future of refugees and displaced persons. We endorse what the Italian presidency of the European Union had to say on this question in its statement. In addition, Poland would like to call upon all States on whose territories these people have taken refuge to provide them with all necessary assistance and support to facilitate their return in safety to their homes.

The human rights question continues to be of fundamental importance to the future of the whole region, including Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. The close cooperation of UNTAES with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is, in the view of our delegation, a prerequisite for the success of the operation as well as for the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Finally, the security and safety of the new peace-keeping operation is, as usual, at the centre of our attention. In our view, the provisions of the draft resolution provide the peace-keepers with the guarantees they need to discharge their duties.

In the light of what I have said, Poland will vote in favour of the two draft resolutions before the Security Council today.

Mr. Henze (Germany): Like Poland, Germany, of course, fully supports the statement that was made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

With the draft resolution on Eastern Slavonia before the Council, the members of the Security Council will today take an important decision. Their affirmative vote sets in motion a process that has one clear and unequivocal objective: the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into the Republic of Croatia.

This is a national priority of the Government and people of the Republic of Croatia, which the German side fully understands and supports. We are ready to acknowledge that Croatia's patience has been tested severely over a long time in this regard. The events of Vukovar and the establishment of Serb control over Eastern Slavonia, which took place in 1991 with the decisive assistance of the former Yugoslav army, must not be forgotten. It is something that no country would have accepted.

The full implementation of the Basic Agreement offers the best chance we have had in a long time to avoid further war. It is, in our view, also the best chance to begin a process that can and — we hope — will lead to a better future of peaceful coexistence of Serbs and Croats in the Republic of Croatia. That is why my country fully supports the establishment of a United Nations peace-keeping operation for the region of Eastern Slavonia, with both military and civilian components, under the name of UNTAES — United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. Like the Basic Agreement itself, this operation must be guided by two important principles: on the one hand, the gradual re-establishment of the sovereignty of Croatia with regard to Eastern Slavonia; and on the other, the indispensable necessity to ensure full protection for, and guarantees for the rights of, the local Serb population.

We are under no illusions; we understand that the implementation of the Basic Agreement will be a particularly difficult operation, fraught with numerous risks and difficulties appearing even in areas where one would not expect them to appear. It is therefore of the utmost importance that both sides cooperate fully, and that the Croatian side and the local Serb side show maximum restraint and moderation during all phases of the operation. The Croatian side in particular must show the necessary patience and restraint, so that the Transitional Administration can work under conditions conducive to gradual confidence-building with the local Serb population.

There can be no doubt that the process of demilitarization, as provided for in the Basic Agreement, will be a very crucial phase. The aim is a complete demilitarization of the region within 30 days after the assessment of the Transitional Administrator that the military component of UNTAES has been deployed and is ready to undertake its mission. We will support all efforts by the Transitional Administrator and UNTAES to achieve demilitarization without incidents and as smoothly as possible.

In this connection, let me express our appreciation to the United States of America for its readiness to offer

General Jacques Klein as Transitional Administrator. The mandate of UNTAES described in the draft resolution leaves no doubt that he will have a challenging and manifold task indeed: the Transitional Administrator will have overall authority over the civilian and military components of UNTAES. On the civilian side, there will be the establishment of a temporary police force, of structures for civil administration and public services; the facilitation of the return of refugees; and the organization of elections. We also thank those countries willing to provide civilian, police and military personnel for these far-reaching and complex tasks.

While we welcome the fact that our American partners have put their weight and support behind General Klein and UNTAES, we, on the German side, will also do what we can to assist UNTAES. We encourage the Government of the Republic of Croatia to contribute in all possible ways to the success of UNTAES. This, in our view, is a logical consequence of the fact that UNTAES serves the purpose of the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia into the Republic of Croatia. Financial means to alleviate the burden of UNTAES in specific areas will be an investment in a united Croatia.

The Basic Agreement on Eastern Slavonia became possible on the basis of the understanding reached by President Tudjman and President Milosević in Dayton. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continues to bear a major responsibility for the situation in Eastern Slavonia. Consequently, the leadership in Belgrade must help actively to make the implementation of the Basic Agreement succeed. We will follow closely and continuously the attitude of the FRY authorities in this regard.

My delegation also supports the draft resolution on the Prevlaka peninsula. Our interest is that security and stability prevail in this area. The demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula has made a positive contribution to this end. With this draft resolution, the Council reaffirms once again its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia. We hope that the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will soon achieve a practical arrangement that would peacefully resolve their differences in this context and thus foster good-neighbourly relations in the area.

With regard to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, much has been achieved in recent months. This progress was made possible by an enormous effort on the part of the international community, with the United States of America playing a prominent role. We are also observing hopeful signs of an improving relationship between the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We hope that mutual recognition will come soon. We also hope that the day will come when Croats and Serbs can again shake hands and live together in peace, be it in the Republic of Croatia, in Eastern Slavonia or in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

It is in this spirit that we shall vote in favour of the draft resolutions before the Council.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/23.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Botswana, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1037 (1996).

I shall now put to the vote the second draft resolution, contained in document S/1996/24.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Botswana, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1038 (1996).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): The two draft resolutions before us today will further advance the peace process in the former Yugoslavia. The United States firmly supports the resolution the Security Council has adopted on Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. A peaceful solution in Eastern Slavonia is

essential to a lasting peace in all the regions of the former Yugoslavia.

In the 12 November Basic Agreement, the Croatian Government and local Serbs committed themselves to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. In that Agreement, the parties appealed to the international community to assist in its implementation. The resolution we have just voted on responds to that request.

The United States played a facilitating role in the negotiations that led to the 12 November Agreement. We believe that the Basic Agreement provides an opportunity to resolve the conflict over Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, in a manner consistent with previous resolutions of this Council and international law. It calls for the peaceful reintegration of those territories with the Republic of Croatia after a clearly defined transitional period. It also protects the human rights of all residents, including the local Serb population, while providing for the return of refugees and displaced persons.

Eastern Slavonia has been the scene of horrible abuses of human rights. Strict implementation of the Agreement will lead to a peaceful solution in which human rights are respected and the people of the region are allowed to choose their leaders through free and democratic elections. The international community is prepared to do its part to help implement the agreement. But in the final analysis it will be up to the parties to put aside the hatreds of the past four years and together begin to build a new future.

The resolution we have just adopted establishes a new peace-keeping operation that will assist in the demilitarization of the region, facilitate its return to Croatian control and help promote a return to normal life. As requested by the parties, its mandate ensures that the new operation, the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), will be able to "govern" the region in an authoritative fashion. The parties have clearly expressed their intention to entrust the region's short-term future to our leadership. The resolution we are now adopting provides us with the means to reward their trust with the kind of stewardship that the region and its people deserve.

In agreeing to undertake this complex responsibility, the international community will demand that both the Serb and Croat sides fully implement the 12 November Agreement. UNTAES will not be expected to implement the Agreement by force, nor will it be expected to defend the region from an armed incursion. The international community will not tolerate actions that endanger the lives of the peace-keepers we are sending to the region. Anyone contemplating such actions should think twice. The meaning of paragraph 14 of the resolution we have just adopted is clear — UNTAES will have the right to ask for assistance if its personnel are in danger. The presence just across the border in Bosnia of the implementation force (IFOR), and the presence of other powerful military forces nearby, should make it clear that the international community has the capability to punish anyone who endangers the lives of UNTAES personnel. Further, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has already decided to provide close air support if requested by UNTAES.

The second resolution before us today authorizes United Nations military observers to continue to monitor the agreement on the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula and surrounding territory. My Government has no doubt that the Prevlaka peninsula is sovereign Croatian territory. Nevertheless, we call on both sides to continue to comply with their agreement to demilitarize that strategically important area. We note that the resolution calls on the Secretary-General to submit by 15 March a report which would comment on the possibility of another international organization's assuming the task of monitoring the Prevlaka peninsula. My Government looks forward to that report, and expects that the Council will act on it as appropriate.

The adoption of these resolutions culminates a period of intense diplomatic activity. Yet it is only the beginning of a process. Much essential work remains to be done. We salute those States that have offered to contribute to UNTAES. At the request of the Secretary-General, an American citizen, Jacques Klein, who is both an experienced diplomat and a general in the Air Force Reserve, is poised to assume leadership of the operation. The United States will continue to search for ways to assist the operation.

In closing, I would like to express our appreciation for the rapid response the United Nations and the international community have made to this complex and sensitive issue. The Balkans have been the scene of far too many tragedies in recent years. Today's resolutions are two more indications that the peoples of the former Yugoslavia might be ready to embrace a future based on peace and respect for international law. The United States

remains committed to the work that lies ahead and urges all like-minded States to join in that effort.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): The Council has unanimously adopted the resolution implementing the peace plan set out in the Basic Agreement of 12 November 1995, thus signifying its unequivocal support for the operation to succeed the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) from tomorrow. On this occasion I should like to pay tribute to the personnel of the United Nations who served in that United Nations operation.

The success of the operation which we have decided upon today will be of great importance for the entire region. The two operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Eastern Slavonia are interrelated and will influence each other. The war in former Yugoslavia started in Vukovar. Peace — the end of the conflict — must come to Sarajevo and to Vukovar.

Our Council, however, has another reason for wanting this new operation to succeed. The war in Croatia has given rise to a succession of human tragedies, which in their turn have brought both violence and hatred. The resolution should break this cycle of war and vengeance.

It is, in any event, in this context that the French delegation will fully support the action of the Transitional Administrator, who is shortly to be appointed by the Secretary-General, and whose name we know, and also the civilian and military personnel of the United Nations who will be placed under his overall authority.

In accordance with the terms of the Basic Agreement and the report of the Secretary-General, on which the resolution is largely based, the authority of the Transitional Administrator should be total during the transition period in order for him to be able to govern effectively. This does not mean that this authority is unconditional. The tasks assigned to the Administrator, acting on behalf of the United Nations, are listed in the resolution — specifically in paragraph 11, which spells out the civilian tasks which will have to be carried out. Priorities for the Administrator are clearly to restore normal living conditions to the region; to return all refugees and displaced persons to their home of origin; and to protect the rights of all the inhabitants of the region, which will require the creation of an effective and active police force under strict international control. In this context, the military component of the force will have a crucial role to play. This is why answers to questions regarding the size of the force, its nature and when it can start to operate are very important.

In the light of recent experience, the French delegation expressed its agreement with the conclusions reached in the report of the Secretary-General. We are gratified that these conclusions are broadly reflected in the text.

The process of demilitarizing Eastern Slavonia will be the first test of the Agreement's viability. It is therefore very important to recall the conditions in which this will take place, in order to avoid future misunderstandings or unjust criticism. Our Council has decided today that nothing can be done without the military component of the operation being fully deployed in the territory and being fully operational, which will obviously take some time. The purpose of the United Nations force is not merely to be part of the demilitarization process, but to make it possible by creating through its presence an atmosphere of security and stability.

Nevertheless, it will not be the duty of the military component to itself carry out the demilitarization. This process will continue to be the entire responsibility of the parties involved, which will have to fulfil their commitments in this area. That is why our Council plans to review the situation at regular intervals, in order to draw conclusions as to the parties' respect, or lack of respect, for their commitments and the reasons they have given to explain their attitudes.

The agreement of the parties and their willingness to cooperate sincerely — these are the real conditions for the operation's success. In accordance with the Basic Agreement, our resolution has created a framework and defined ways to help the parties reach a peaceful solution to the conflict. But it is up to them to assume their responsibilities.

It was in the same spirit, and in accordance with the Council's consistent policy on this subject, that the French delegation supported the adoption of the draft resolution extending, following the recommendations of the Secretary-General, the mandate of the United Nations observers monitoring the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

The adoption of these two resolutions, which the United Kingdom welcomes, is a further demonstration of the international community's willingness to support efforts by those in the Balkan region to settle their differences peacefully. Those efforts must succeed if a lasting and durable peace is to be established.

Over the last four years this Council has sought to facilitate the emergence of such a peace. It has from the start worked to promote respect for Croatian sovereignty and territorial integrity and to promote reconciliation between the different communities in that country, as well as between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The fact that the Basic Agreement exists at all is a testimony to this Council's efforts, and we salute the dedication and patience of the negotiators who helped to bring it about. It is on the basis of that Agreement, and in the light of the commitment of all concerned to its early and peaceful implementation, that this Council has decided to send United Nations peace-keepers to Eastern Slavonia. We now need to work for the earliest possible deployment of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) in order to allow the development of mutual confidence between the communities and the full implementation of the Agreement. The British Government expresses its appreciation to those countries which have already confirmed their willingness to make troops available for this operation, and we hope that other Member States will follow suit.

The British Government also supports the decision to continue the presence of United Nations observers on the Prevlaka peninsula to monitor its demilitarization. Their presence has helped contain and reduce tension and open the way for Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to settle their differences peacefully. We look to the Croatian and Yugoslav Governments to redouble their efforts towards that end.

It is a simple truth, but one which bears restating, that if United Nations peace-keepers are to be able to carry out effectively and in safety the mandates we have just given them, they must be able to count on the parties' full cooperation. There can be no justification whatsoever for any resort to military means, whether to accelerate or to frustrate implementation of the commitments they have made. This Council will monitor the progress of implementation of the Basic Agreement closely, not least in the light of past failures by those concerned to live up to their undertakings. Successful implementation will be key to opening the way for Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to play a fuller part in the European family of nations.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3620

Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3620th Meeting

Wednesday, 24 January 1996, 1 p.m.

New York

President:	Sir John Weston	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Nkgowe
	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Abdel Aziz
	France	Mr. Ladsous
	Germany	Mr. Biontino
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Mano Queta
	Honduras	Mr. Rendón Barnica
	Indonesia	Mr. Wibisono
	Italy	Mr. Fulci
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shkourko
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/1996/42)

96-85079 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 1.10 p.m.

Tribute to the memory of the King of the Kingdom of Lesotho, His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II

The President: On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I should like to express profound shock and sorrow at the recent passing of the King of the Kingdom of Lesotho, His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II. King Moshoeshoe II was dedicated to the cause of international peace and security and played an important role in the quest for stability and development in southern Africa. I request the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the United Nations to convey to the Government and people of Lesotho and to the bereaved family the Council's profound condolences.

I now invite the members of the Council to rise and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of the late King of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/1996/42)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in the course of its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia, document S/1996/42.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia dated 19 January 1996 (S/1996/42) and is deeply concerned about the absence of any credible progress towards national reconciliation. It calls upon all Somali political leaders and parties to return to an inclusive process of consultation and negotiation aimed at national reconciliation leading to the establishment of a broad-based national government.

"The Security Council welcomes with appreciation the efforts of the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, the European Union and neighbouring States in promoting national dialogue in the search for a solution to the Somali crisis. These efforts demonstrate the commitment of the international community not to abandon the people of Somalia. It reaffirms that the people of Somalia bear ultimate responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and restoring peace. In this respect, the Council urges the leaders of Somali factions to reject violence and place the interests of the country and people above their personal differences and political ambitions.

"The Security Council also welcomes and supports the Secretary-General's intention to maintain the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS). It stresses the importance of its maintaining close cooperation with the regional organizations, monitoring developments in Somalia and continuing contacts with Somali factions. It looks forward to the return of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia to Somalia as soon as circumstances permit.

"The Security Council expresses deep concern at the continuing conflict. The resulting insecurity, banditry and general lawlessness increase the suffering of the civilian population. The Council condemns the harassment, beatings, abduction and killings of personnel of international humanitarian organizations, and underlines the responsibility of all parties in Somalia for ensuring the safety and security of humanitarian and other international personnel. This atmosphere of insecurity has regrettably forced the United Nations agencies to relocate international personnel thus hindering the smooth delivery of much needed humanitarian assistance.

"The Security Council commends the valiant efforts of United Nations and international humanitarian agencies and their Somali personnel

for the courage and determination to render assistance to the people of Somalia. The Council encourages Member States to continue to provide humanitarian assistance in order to avoid a further deterioration of the current situation.

"The Security Council considers the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance to be a crucial factor in the overall security and stability of Somalia. In this respect, the closure of Mogadishu main seaport and other transportation facilities severely aggravates the present situation and poses a potential major impediment to future emergency deliveries. The Council calls upon the Somali parties and factions to open those facilities unconditionally.

"The Security Council reminds all States of their obligation to implement fully the general and complete embargo imposed by paragraph 5 of resolution 733 (1992) on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia. In this respect it calls on all States to refrain from any actions which might exacerbate the situation in Somalia.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to keep it informed about developments in Somalia. The Council remains seized of the matter".

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1996/4.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.3621

Security Council
Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3621st Meeting
Thursday, 25 January 1996, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir John Weston	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Nkgowe
	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Awaad
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Germany	Mr. Ettel
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Mano Queta
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wibisono
	Italy	Mr. Casardi
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1996/47 and Add.1)

96-85089 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1996/47 and Add.1)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland, Togo and Tunisia in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Sirleaf (Liberia) took a seat at the Council table; Mrs. Kaba (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic), Mr. Eteffa (Ethiopia), Mr. Jallow (Gambia), Mr. Lamptey (Ghana), Mrs. Camara (Guinea), Mr. Avewah (Nigeria), Mr. Cissé (Senegal), Mr. Nhleko (Swaziland), Mr. Ta'ama (Togo) and Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

The purpose of this meeting is to allow a first consideration of the fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, which is before members in documents S/1996/47 and Addendum 1.

The first speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Liberian National Transitional Government, Mr. Momolu S. V. Sirleaf, whom I welcome and on whom I now call.

Mr. Sirleaf (Liberia): It is an honour and privilege for me to address the Security Council as it considers the situation in Liberia, which is vividly captured in the fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), contained in document S/1996/47 of 23 January 1996.

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of January. Already your tenure has produced positive results. We welcome the innovation in the working methods of the Council which, *inter alia*, affords interested delegations an opportunity to participate in open deliberations of the Council prior to its decisions on matters bearing on the maintenance of international peace and security. Undoubtedly, this approach promotes transparency, broadens participation in the Council's work, and points towards the eventual enlargement and democratization of the Council.

I would also like to extend to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the sincere gratitude of the Council of State and the people of Liberia for his deep personal concern with, and untiring involvement in the search for a durable, peaceful solution to the Liberian civil war. In particular, we recall with thanks his initiatives which facilitated the convening of the Conference on Assistance to Liberia, during which financial and other pledges were made in support of the Abuja Agreement, the disarmament and demobilization processes, the recovery and rehabilitation needs of the country, and assistance to the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the execution of its mandate. We also applaud Mr. Boutros-Ghali for his visit to Liberia on 29 November 1995, another manifestation of his interest, which resulted in the clarification of relevant issues in the peace process.

In my address to the General Assembly during its fiftieth session, I said:

> "The Abuja Agreement will hold and usher in a new dawn for Liberia; but even if it did not hold, we would still pursue peace, [and] ignore those who prefer war to peace ..." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 25th meeting, p. 10)*

We also apprised the Assembly that the installation of the Council of State last September pointed towards a final peaceful resolution of the Liberian crisis and raised the hopes of Liberians, who believe that the process is now irreversible. The Liberian civil war is virtually over.

Today, I reiterate to the Security Council and the international community that the Council of State remains firmly committed to the terms of the Abuja Agreement, and will employ its best efforts to ensure that the peace process is not derailed. In this connection, the Council of State considers the recent skirmishes in Tubmanburg and other areas of the country as unfortunate incidents which will not deprive the people of Liberia of the peace they have longed for for the last six years. We have therefore held consultations with the disaffected party in order to hear its grievances and find acceptable peaceful means to address them. Additionally, the Council of State has informed that party, in unambiguous terms, that the peace process will proceed according to the Abuja Agreement.

We are not unmindful that the war was waged by Liberians against themselves, and of the consequent toll it has exacted from countries of the West African subregion, which, through ECOMOG, provided the enabling environment for Liberians to harmonize their differences by way of peaceful negotiations. We deeply appreciate the many sacrifices which ECOWAS member States continue to make for the restoration of peace in the country.

We are also grateful to the United Nations, its specialized agencies and Member States for the provision of humanitarian assistance in the form of food, medicines and so on. However, as Liberians endeavour to make the transition from war to peace, we appeal to the international community to empathize with the circumstances now obtaining in the country.

Some degree of anxiety still exists within and among the warring factions. As the war wanes, combatants have their anxious moments. What life awaits them after years of knowing only armed confrontation? We have to abate their fears, and we stand in need of substantial assistance to provide productive alternatives in civil society.

Since 1990, ECOMOG has kept the peace in Liberia. It has had to do so with the meagre resources of the troop-contributing countries. Over and over again, appeals have been made to the international community to supplement the wherewithal provided by ECOWAS in order to advance the peace process in all of its terms. As the peace process is now at a critical juncture, we appeal to the international community to be more understanding and lend the necessary assistance for ECOMOG to carry out its mandate in pursuance of the Abuja Agreement.

ECOWAS has taken on an unprecedented task. It has given concrete expression to the much-heralded talk about cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. In this respect, my delegation believes that the international community has more to gain from ECOWAS's success in Liberia if the necessary assistance is provided.

In conclusion, I wish to re-emphasize that the Council of State has given its solemn pledge to the Liberian people that it will abide by the Abuja Agreement. The Council has also pledged its fullest support for the ECOWAS peace initiative, and is awaiting the signing of the status-of-forces agreement. While realizing that Liberians are ultimately responsible for restoring peace and democracy in their country, we need the Council's help to jump start the process of disarmament and demobilization, social and economic rehabilitation and the holding of national elections that will return the country to civil administration under the rule of law.

The delegation of Liberia commends to the Council the recommendation of the Secretary-General that UNOMIL's mandate be extended until 31 May 1996, and joins in his appeal for increased support to ECOMOG. For our part, I pledge anew the commitment of the Council of State to the full implementation of the Abuja Agreement.

The President: I thank the representative of Liberia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): The Council has convened today to examine, among a wider group of Member States, the Secretary-General's fifteenth progress report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and to discuss the future of Liberia.

I have just returned from a trip to Africa, including Liberia. President Clinton asked me to travel to Liberia to assess the situation there. Although I have not yet reported to President Clinton, I would like to express today some observations and reflections on the situation in Liberia.

First, I share many of the views set forth in the Secretary-General's report. The peace process is indeed at a critical juncture, as he wrote,

> "and the full support of all concerned will be required to overcome the recent setbacks." (*S/1996/47, para. 42*)

The Secretary-General's observations about maintaining the cease-fire, the need for more resources to help the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to fulfil its responsibilities effectively and the need to reintegrate ex-combatants into civilian society: these are all central to finding a lasting peace in Liberia.

I must admit that I am both sceptical and hopeful about the prospects for peace in Liberia. On the one hand, Liberia appears to have hit rock-bottom. On the other, members of the Council of State seem to be working well together and all claim, at least, to be committed to peace. Thus far, they are acting as though they are committed. Yet it is unclear whether their commitment will be sustained as disarmament begins and elections approach. It is also not certain that each of the main warlords can maintain control of his fighters. Some who feel left out of the process may be capable of undoing it.

The conflict in Liberia is among the élites, not among the people. They are fighting not over ideology, but over personal power. That creates both risks and opportunities. The risks are that the drive for personal power, particularly among the extremists, can lead to further carnage and destruction with little interest in preserving or building society. There is opportunity in the fact that it is difficult to sustain a power struggle on personal ambition alone. Ultimately, the people want peace in the absence of any ideological goal. The people of Liberia want peace.

In my meeting with the Council of State, I stressed the importance of the Council's role in keeping the peace process on track so that ECOMOG deployment — temporarily interrupted by fighting and attacks on civilians in various areas by the ULIMO followers of General Johnson — can recommence. I said that, although the United States and the international community remain committed to helping Liberia, only Liberians can make the peace. I told them that the international community is losing its patience. The Abuja peace process that took so long to negotiate is now at a critical state of implementation. The moderates will have to perform better if they are to sustain the support of the international community.

The members of the Council of State offered many reasons for the delay in disarmament and demobilization. Everyone but themselves was to blame. My message to them was simple: "No more excuses." There can be no further delay in implementing the most important provisions of the Abuja Agreement, namely, those on disarmament and demobilization. As far as the United States is concerned, the word "delay" can no longer be part of the vocabulary of the Council of State. Otherwise, the fragile peace that does exist will collapse.

Overall, at least for now, I found ECOMOG performing well. It seems to be playing a neutral and constructive role now, as opposed to at various times in the past. Despite ECOMOG's losses in recent weeks, I was impressed by General Inienger's resolve to move forward in the face of adversity. We believe that ECOMOG deserves our support, both for the important role it is now playing in Liberia and because it represents an important precedent in regional peace-keeping that should be encouraged.

We believe, however, that ECOMOG's force structure should be more diversified among member States of the region if it is to constitute an authentic regional peace-keeping operation worthy of international support. We also believe that ECOMOG must enter into a status-of-forces agreement with the Liberian National Transitional Government so that ECOMOG's operations in Liberia are appropriately regulated.

As the Secretary-General points out in his report, the international community

> "must provide the resources necessary to enable ECOMOG to fulfil its responsibilities effectively". (*ibid.*)

In recent years, the United States has provided $420 million in humanitarian assistance and $60 million in support of ECOMOG's peace-keeping activities. On 27 October, the United States pledged an additional $75 million to support peace, including $10 million to assist ECOMOG logistically. The vehicles ECOMOG desperately needs to facilitate disarmament and demobilization have begun to arrive under the $10 million pledge and we hope to provide a total of up to 100 vehicles within the near future. In fact, the deployment of ECOMOG troops in December was made

possible only by using trucks leased by my Government through the assistance of the United Nations. However, I said while in Monrovia that the United States has no intention of allowing its logistical support to be squandered by a failure of political will — by any side — to achieve the objectives of the Abuja Agreement.

The United States calls upon all other Member States to provide similar assistance as quickly as possible. The assistance is needed not only for ECOMOG itself, but also to provide a more attractive demobilization package for ex-combatants.

I also want to acknowledge the courageous work of the observers of UNOMIL. Their role is vital to the success of the Abuja Agreement. When I was in Monrovia, I stressed to UNOMIL officers that, in addition to monitoring the disengagement and disarmament of the combatants and assisting in their demobilization, we expect UNOMIL to follow through urgently on its other responsibilities, including investigating and reporting to the Secretary-General on human rights abuses, on any major violations of international humanitarian law and on humanitarian assistance activities. We have noted with some concern the criticism from the non-governmental organization community that UNOMIL is failing to meet these responsibilities. We have no doubt that it is a tough assignment. I told the Council of State that no party should hinder UNOMIL's important tasks.

We are studying the Secretary-General's recommendation that the UNOMIL mandate should be extended for a period of four months, until 31 May, with an interim report by the end of March. We believe that it is very important for the Council to continue to review the situation, and to continue to assess the progress of disarmament and demobilization, and of the preparations for elections, which are scheduled for August under the Abuja Agreement.

There is a simplistic way of looking at Liberia: that it is a land of chaos. I do not subscribe to that view. It is true that Monrovia is a devastated city, yet I witnessed a daily life on the streets that embodies a discipline and hope that the leaders of the country must nurture and live up to.

I delivered a blunt message to the Liberian leadership in Monrovia: the era of the child soldier in Liberia must come to an end immediately. It is an outrage by any standard of civilization that children under the age of 15, numbering between 4,000 and 6,000, are toting automatic weapons, slaughtering innocent civilians and ignoring the rule of law. They have no identity other than through the weapon they carry. We believe that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) can play a key role in rehabilitating these abused children, and I pressed that point during my discussions in Monrovia. The United States stands ready to assist UNICEF and the people of Liberia in order to save these children.

Many United Nations relief agencies are actively assisting the people of Liberia. I visited with many of their administrators. We can all be proud of their contribution in the face of adversity. But the international community needs to go one step further and consider how demobilized soldiers and other citizens can be put back to work rebuilding their country's infrastructure which, to put it bluntly, is trashed. The international community should have ready the technical assistance and other resources to help rehabilitate Liberia through technical and financial assistance for doable, targeted public works projects.

Implementing the Abuja Agreement is Liberia's best chance to achieve peace and justice. The violence must end, and the hatred must subside. Liberia's leaders must find the political will, and its people the political courage, to succeed in building a new, peaceful and prosperous Liberia.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): First of all, I welcome this opportunity to have an open debate on the situation in Liberia in general and on the role of the United Nations there. We feel that the report of the Secretary-General is a solid basis for this debate, and we are grateful for that report. A debate of this kind can give valuable direction for our further discussions in the Security Council, and we support any measures, such as this, which increase transparency.

Germany is extremely concerned at the lack of progress in the implementation of the Abuja Peace agreement. The parties in Liberia have fallen several months behind schedule in meeting their obligations, a development which is starting to affect seriously the entire peace process in the country. We are particularly concerned at the recent outbreak of fighting between soldiers of General Roosevelt Johnson's wing of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO-J) and Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops, which is a severe setback to efforts undertaken by the international community to mediate in the Liberian conflict

We welcome the fact, however, that the factions represented in the State Council seem determined to adhere to the Abuja peace Agreement, and we urge them to exert control over their military forces so that they observe the cease-fire and in order to bring about the disengagement of troops, which are focal points of the peace plan and an important element for progress towards security and confidence-building in the country.

In this context, we would like to make it very clear that the cessation of hostilities between the warring factions and the restoration of security in Liberia is essential to any measures of reconstruction and development that the international community might consider to help Liberia and its people overcome the devastating consequences of the civil war. We welcome the statement by the Foreign Minister of Liberia that we have just heard to the effect that the civil war is practically over.

Germany would like to emphasize the important and useful role that ECOMOG has been playing in Liberia, and thanks the troop-contributing countries for their commitment in Liberia. The wider deployment of ECOMOG to several other regions of the country will be an important stabilizing factor for the country as a whole, despite any initial difficulties that may arise, as in the case of Tubmanburg.

The work of ECOMOG in Liberia is an important example of a successful African peace-keeping mission in which African countries have assumed a great share of responsibility for the re-establishment of peace and stability in one of the countries of their continent, and thus for the stabilization of the region as a whole. Furthermore, the cooperation between ECOMOG and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) demonstrates that cooperation and a division of labour between the United Nations and regional organizations is a feasible model. In this context, Germany supports the initiatives by the Secretary-General to develop coordination and cooperation with regional organizations.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African States can play an important role in conflict resolution in Africa. Germany therefore also welcomes and supports the continuing efforts of the OAU and the African States to strengthen their capacity with regard to preventive diplomacy, conflict management and peace-keeping.

Despite the difficulties we are presently witnessing in the Liberian peace process, and of which we have just heard a pertinent and vivid assessment by the representative of the United States, the German Government believes that the parties in the State Council remain committed to a timely implementation of the Abuja peace plan. We therefore support the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the mandate of UNOMIL for another four months.

However, during this period, the political will of the parties to achieve tangible progress, and practical evidence of that progress, will have to be monitored very carefully. If there is no visible progress soon with regard to maintaining the cease-fire, the disengagement of troops and disarmament, we would have difficulties in supporting a further extension of UNOMIL's mandate.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): We wish to welcome the statement just made by the Liberian Foreign Minister.

There has been fighting in Liberia on and off for six years already, since the outbreak of its civil war in 1989. This war in Western Africa has caused severe damage to the economy of Liberia, killed over 100,000 people and reduced another 700,000 to the condition of refugees. It is also posing a threat to peace and stability in neighbouring countries and the region as a whole.

In recent years, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has made tremendous efforts to end the fighting in Liberia. Those States have sent peace-keeping forces to Liberia, in accordance with Chapter VIII, despite their own economic difficulties. Heads of State or Government of the countries concerned in the region have also met on many occasions to offer good offices and mediation, with a view to seeking a proper solution to the Liberian question. The United Nations has also made unremitting efforts to this end.

The dawn of peace once came to Liberia. Recently, however, the situation in Liberia has deteriorated again, as shown by the casualties suffered by the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the grimmer humanitarian situation and continued difficulties in the comprehensive implementation of the Abuja Agreement. We are deeply concerned and disturbed by these developments.

The Liberian crisis is now at a critical moment. The international community and the countries concerned are doing their best for a renewed cease-fire among various parties in Liberia. Facts have proved that only when the parties concerned truly give up war and persist in

peaceful negotiations can there be a momentum of peace for turning swords into ploughshares. Therefore, we strongly urge the Liberian parties to cooperate with the United Nations and ECOWAS, strictly implement the Agreement already reached and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and take effective measures to complete at an early date the disarmament and demobilization of combatants so as to create conditions for the final realization of national reconciliation. The international community should also take concrete actions to support the efforts of ECOWAS and give full play to its role in this process.

Africa, with its rich resources and industrious people, is an important force in the international arena. African peoples, who have suffered greatly from conflicts and war, are now working hard to create a peaceful environment, rebuild their homelands and develop their national economies. The Chinese Government has all along held that world peace and development cannot be achieved without Africa's participation. A stable and developing Africa is conducive to world peace and prosperity. Therefore, we sincerely hope that African peoples will strengthen unity and cooperation, overcome difficulties and, with the help of the international community and through their own efforts, resolve various disputes at an early date, thus embarking on the road to national unity and economic development. We believe that with the joint efforts of the international community and African countries, a solution will ultimately be found to the Liberian conflict. China will work together with the international community to achieve this objective.

Mr. Casardi (Italy): Just a few months ago — on 10 November 1995 — the Security Council met to adopt a resolution that recognized the new situation created in Liberia following the Abuja peace Agreement. The resolution pointed out the appreciable progress the Liberian parties had recently made towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict, including the re-establishment of a cease-fire and an agreement on a timetable for the implementation of the peace process, from cease-fire to election.

As we know, the Secretary-General's latest report presents us with a very gloomy and disturbing picture of the peace process. I must admit that one may feel discouraged by its contents: recently there have been major violations of the cease-fire, which have taken a tragic toll on the African soldiers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). These developments, in turn, have prevented the complete deployment of both ECOMOG and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and therefore substantially delayed the critical process of disarmament and demobilization in general terms. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep condolences to the families and Governments of the soldiers that have lost their lives.

Despite these serious setbacks and the delays in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement of August 1995, we share the opinion of the Secretary-General that the United Nations and the international community must remain committed to the Liberian peace process. In spite of all the negative circumstances in the country, there is still an adequate degree of commitment to attaining peace.

At this particular stage, the complete cooperation of the Liberian National Transitional Government and the Council of State with both ECOMOG and UNOMIL is of paramount importance. Together, they can ensure that the Liberian factions fulfil their obligations and enable the start of an effective disengagement of forces, which in turn will allow the process of disarmament and demobilization to begin.

A few months ago, a donor conference was held in New York. We understand that the availability of adequate financial resources for the peace process are at this moment critical. As the Secretary-General correctly points out, however, such support will also depend on the establishment throughout the country of a safe and secure environment.

The international donor community is nevertheless strongly committed to helping the Liberian people in the critical field of humanitarian assistance. The European Union, both directly and through the bilateral aid of some of its member States, is among the major providers of relief assistance to the country.

We are convinced that steady progress in the peace process will greatly improve the capacity of the donor community to commit itself to the search for peace and stability in Liberia, a goal that can be reached only if the parties in the country show that they are truly committed to this objective. We are ready to verify in the next few months whether it can be fulfilled.

Mr. Nkgowe (Botswana): The "Fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia" (S/1996/47) affords us an

opportunity to consider such a report in a formal meeting of the Security Council. This is a positive response to the wishes of the Member States to bring about transparency in the work and decision-making process of the United Nations. It is a matter of particular significance to my delegation that it is the situation in Liberia, one of the oldest conflicts in Africa, that is being discussed under this arrangement. It is our hope that today's meeting will focus the attention of the international community on the Liberian tragedy and the need to find an urgent solution to it.

The efforts of the Chairman of the Council of State, Mr. Wilton Sankawulo, and the Vice-Chairmen of the Council in explaining the peace process to the combatants, with a view to preparing them for disarmament and demobilization, are commendable. There is no doubt that the peace process will endure and remain sustainable only if the people who actually have control over the instruments of war at their command understand the need to disarm and demobilize. All the members of the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) should make concerted efforts to contribute to this noble task by ensuring that those loyal to them receive the same message. The provision of assistance to ex-combatants should be improved and make attractive their reintegration into civilian life. The Liberian political leaders and parties should do all in their power to create a climate conducive to the delivery of such assistance. The international community needs to be assured that this assistance will be used for the purpose for which it is intended. The creation of conditions of security and stability in the country is indispensable to inspiring confidence in this regard.

The report (S/1995/1042) of the Secretary-General dated 18 December 1995 informed the Council that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) had decided to deploy troops in the most critical areas of Liberia in an effort to maintain the momentum of the peace process. This is a commendable task by ECOMOG, given the risks involved in such an endeavour. The tragic events of 28 December 1995, regrettable as they are, highlighted the difficulties and realities with which ECOMOG has to contend. We condemn the senseless attack on ECOMOG and deeply regret the loss of human life. The Security Council should call upon all factions to respect the cease-fire and direct their energies to the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia. It is true that ECOMOG took a risk

> "in deploying its troops without the strength and resources necessary to carry out its mandate". *(S/1996/47, para. 5)*

But is it not equally true that the situation could have deteriorated further had ECOMOG done nothing?

In paragraph 17, the report of the Secretary-General speaks of a most disturbing development in the implementation of the Abuja Peace Agreement. The report indicates not only that the implementation of the Agreement is behind schedule, but that the whole peace process is in serious danger of being completely derailed. The international community should not allow this situation to continue irreversibly. The solution to this dangerous development is known to the international community: ECOMOG urgently needs financial and logistic support. A lot has already been said about ECOMOG's lack of financial and logistic resources. It is most regrettable, therefore, that five months after the signing of the Abuja Peace Agreement ECOMOG has not yet been provided with the necessary resources.

It is time the international community lived up to its responsibilities in the maintenance of peace and security. It should demonstrate its resolve and determination to search for solutions to all conflict situations in the world in equal measure and on the basis that peace restored anywhere is peace maintained everywhere. Otherwise, our common humanity and the common destiny of mankind would be in doubt. In other words, conflict situations in Africa should be treated like conflict situations elsewhere, and Liberia is a test-case. Equally, the relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional arrangements in peace-keeping operations should be reviewed so that the former could assist in the peace-keeping missions of regional organizations.

The international community should not lose sight of the crucial role that the holding of legislative and presidential elections could play in establishing a legitimate and representative Government which could contribute to the sustenance of peace and stability in that country. In this respect, we welcome the Secretary-General's intention, stated in paragraph 10 of his report, to send a technical mission to Liberia to consult with the LNTG, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ECOWAS on matters related to the electoral process. We look forward to his report and recommendations.

There is general consensus that the people involved in any given conflict situation bear the ultimate responsibility for the restoration of peace and national reconciliation. The Security Council cannot, however, ignore attempts by a few armed men to frustrate the will of the majority. It is important that the international

community should assist the people of Liberia in whatever way possible to liberate themselves from the clutches of these few armed men and not blame them for, or abandon them in, their captivity.

Botswana supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNOMIL for a period of four months, until 31 May 1996. It is our hope that during this period substantial progress will be made in the implementation of the peace process and that elections will be held as scheduled. And it is also our hope that the international community will be generous in rendering assistance to ECOMOG, which shoulders the greater responsibility in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement.

Mr. Awaad (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The Egyptian delegation would like at the outset to extend its thanks to you, Sir, for convening this meeting, which establishes a very good precedent, one that will definitely contribute to further transparency in the work of the Security Council.

The delegation of Egypt also welcomes both the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia and his statement.

We should like to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General as well as for his fifteenth progress report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). We have carefully studied the report and would like to express our grave concern regarding the delay in implementing the provisions of the Abuja Agreement signed last August. This jeopardizes the possibility of holding presidential and legislative elections on 20 August 1996, as was agreed.

We also regret the latest attacks on ECOMOG in the Tubmanburg region. We extend our condolences to the families of the victims — those who were killed carrying out their duties in maintaining peace on the territory of Liberia.

The peace process in Liberia is at a critical juncture. It requires the full support of all the parties in Liberia to overcome the latest setback to implementation of the provisions of the peace Agreement within the agreed schedule.

Probably the most important step would be to enable the approximately 60,000 soldiers who will be demobilized, from the various factions, to be reintegrated into civilian life and to find them appropriate job opportunities. In our opinion, this requires the international community to attach special importance to rehabilitation projects and the reconstruction of State facilities in order to provide further job opportunities. This, in turn, requires creating a stable and safe environment through full disarmament of the factions and pressure to bear on all parties to abide by the schedule to be agreed upon in order to engage troops in disarmament.

Since its eruption in 1989, the civil war in Liberia has led to great human suffering, with 150,000 victims and the displacement of more than half the country's population. That places a great moral and humanitarian responsibility on the international community to help end the Liberian people's plight, by giving all possible assistance to the governing Council and the new Government as soon as the elections are over.

It is worth mentioning that providing protection and security for UNOMIL, as well as for all the international relief organizations, is an important responsibility that all the Liberian factions should discharge.

The experience of ECOWAS in Liberia is a very good model for the role that regional and non-regional organizations may play in containing and settling conflicts. This experience has demonstrated now important it is that the United Nations, being the "mother" organization, should provide support for these organizations, most of which lack technical and financial resources, as well as equipment, to make regional endeavours a success. Thus the United Nations is directly responsible for making the experience of ECOMOG in Liberia a success, and should learn from this for the future.

The delegation of Egypt would like to confirm that it is important that all countries, particularly Liberia's neighbours, respect the arms embargo imposed by Security Council resolution 788 (1992) and faithfully cooperate with the Committee established to monitor the resolution's implementation. The spread of weapons in Liberia today is the major threat to Liberia's stability and to the stability of countries throughout the region. What Liberia needs today is not more weapons, but humanitarian, technical and financial assistance, so that normality may be restored to the country.

We welcome and support the efforts of the Secretariat, in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme, to extend assistance to Liberia

so that the country may prepare for elections to take place next August, in accordance with the Abuja Agreement.

The Egyptian delegation supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 31 May 1996. We hope that the progress report due to be submitted by the Secretary-General by the end of March 1996 will include positive developments, confirming that the Liberian factions will take positive, serious steps to implement the Abuja Agreement.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): The French delegation has carefully studied the fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). This document, for which we would like to thank our Secretary-General, prompts us to make the following comments.

The Security Council will recall that Liberia went through a very difficult time in 1995, which led us to consider the complete withdrawal of the United Nations from that country. The efforts made by the countries in the region, particularly by the Head of State of Ghana, Mr. Rawlings, and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Nyakyi, made it possible to persuade the factions to sign a new peace Agreement in Abuja on 19 August 1995. That Agreement, which brought into force a cease-fire and effectively established the Council of State, included a tight timetable to bring the Liberians to the polling booths a year after it was signed.

From the outset, it was apparent that this timetable would be very difficult to keep to; that was the view of the Secretary-General himself. The French delegation clearly hopes that the peace process will be concluded as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, we are not very surprised at the recent delays. The disarmament and demobilization process is at the very heart of all peace agreements. The distrust between the factions after five years of civil war explains why, as was equally true in Namibia, Mozambique and El Salvador, difficulties are encountered in carrying out these particular tasks. We note, however, that some progress has been achieved. Assembly sites are being identified, and the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) are assured, for the time being, of the full cooperation of the Council of State, which I repeat, was established only a few months ago.

Technical delays in the implementation of the peace process are therefore understandable. On the other hand, the entrenched reluctance of certain factions to respect the agreements which they have entered into is unpardonable. We have noted, as have other delegations, that the wing of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy led by Mr. Johnson has been responsible for many armed attacks against troops of the African force. We particularly deplore the serious incident on 28 December 1995 in Tubmanburg, which cost the lives of at least 16 men of the ECOMOG force, to whose memory we pay tribute. The French delegation would like to recall, in this connection, that the involvement of the United Nations in Liberia, where approximately 11 peace agreements have already been signed, is conditional upon the good will of the factions to put an end to the war and to restore democracy in that country. We cannot accept extortion by warlords who fear that the return of peace may deprive them of the booty which they appropriated, to the detriment of the civilian population. We find it equally inadmissible that obstacles are still being placed in the way of humanitarian convoys which were freely criss-crossing the country to bring assistance to populations cut off from the outside world for more than three years.

The French delegation is prepared to support the recommendations of the Secretary-General on extending UNOMIL's mandate for an additional period of four months. Nevertheless, we do not intend to leave the factions free for 120 days to apply or not to apply the Agreements signed at Abuja. We therefore hope that the draft resolution soon to be adopted by the Security Council on UNOMIL will contain language allowing the Council to re-examine the situation in Liberia within 60 days, particularly with respect to the implementation by the factions of commitments undertaken in the fields of disarmament and demobilization. Thus the Council will be enabled to review its analysis of the situation if the events make this necessary.

In conclusion, the French Government would like to reiterate that France will continue to provide assistance to Liberia so that that country may rapidly return to the road to progress and democracy. The French Secretary of State with responsibility for humanitarian affairs visited Liberia last month to evaluate the assistance which we could provide to assist the peace process. The French delegation announced during the Conference on Assistance to Liberia that France would soon make a considerable effort. The French Government has decided to provide approximately F15 million in assistance to Liberia; F6 million will be devoted to humanitarian operations and F4 million will be used to promote the

reintegration of populations in the Maryland region. France will also provide aid of F1.5 million to Guinea, which has a battalion within ECOMOG. A payment of F3.5 million to the Special Trust Fund of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace in Liberia will be made shortly.

France hopes that the Liberians, who have committed themselves to restoring peace to their country, will continue to do everything they can to encourage the international community to continue to help them. Aid can never be provided indefinitely. It is therefore also necessary that Liberians of good will seize the opportunity offered to them to close what is, unfortunately, one of the most dismal pages of their national history.

Mr. Martínez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his fifteenth progress report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), which contains his observations on the peace process in that country and his recommendations on a possible extension of UNOMIL's mandate.

We also wish to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia and thank him for taking part in the work at the Security Council today.

In September last year, my delegation, like the rest of this Council, welcomed the fact that following the conclusion of the Abuja Agreement, the leaders of the three Liberian factions had assumed their positions in the Transitional Government. At that time, we welcomed the fact that a cease-fire had been restored and the process of separation of forces had begun.

We also believed at that time that the establishment of the Transitional Government, known as the Council of State, as part of a new agreement aimed at ending the civil war — which had persisted for six years, had taken tens of thousands of lives, had internally displaced many persons and had created refugee flows to neighbouring countries — was an encouraging development that allayed our concerns about the Liberian factions' lack of determination to honour their commitments.

But recent events in Liberia — the armed incidents in the town of Tubmanburg against contingents of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the fighting in the area of Kle, the looting in the city of Robertsport and other parts of the country by forces of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) — make us doubt the political will of the parties to meet the commitments set out in the Abuja Agreement.

These new developments, as the Secretary-General rightly points out in his report, threaten the peace process in Liberia. To be sure, the establishment of the Council of State marked a new level of progress towards putting an end to the war. But many of the past differences between the parties, including the difficult elements of disarmament and demobilization have not yet been resolved.

Although the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy are nominally controlled by their leaders, there are sub-factions that could resume the struggle; moreover, new factions could appear on the scene and demand that the Agreement be revised or that they be included in the process.

Even if the country were to be disarmed and restored to peace, the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for August this year would still pose a serious challenge. There remains the danger that any faction dissatisfied with the preparations, with the process or with the results of the elections could decide to take up arms once again. We believe that even with a democratically elected government in place, Liberia will continue to face enormous obstacles, since its infrastructure has been largely destroyed, tens of thousands have died in the conflict, and hundreds of thousands have left the country.

Nevertheless, my delegation considers that the successful implementation of the Abuja Agreement is essential for the future of Liberia. This may be the last chance for the country to attain lasting peace. Resumption of the struggle would only bring about condemnation by the international community, which could limit or withhold its support for the peace process. It is therefore important for the faction leaders to show that they are fully determined to support the process. As the Secretary-General has indicated, the factions cannot expect the Economic Community of West African States and the international community to support the peace process in Liberia indefinitely, in the absence of clear political will on their part to respect and comply with the commitments they have undertaken.

Once again, and with reference to the 28 December 1995 armed incident in the town of Tubmanburg, we believe that the situation with regard to

ECOMOG and to the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) requires no further clarification. ECOMOG and UNOMIL have worked together to facilitate the implementation of the military aspects of the Cotonou Agreement and are now working to implement the Abuja Agreement and to bring about the most important aspects of disarmament and demobilization. In other words, they are factors in the peace process in Liberia. The December incident, caused by mistrust between the two wings of ULIMO, was unjustifiable, and certainly, as the report of the Secretary-General indicates, was a serious setback for the peace process and delayed the deployment of ECOMOG and UNOMIL forces, which still lack guarantees of safety for their personnel.

We believe that to improve the security situation in Liberia the factions must abide by the cease-fire, make clear progress in the separation of forces, withdraw from the checkpoints, permit the donors of humanitarian aid to go about their work freely, cooperate with ECOMOG and UNOMIL on disarmament and demobilization, and enable UNOMIL to enjoy total freedom of movement throughout Liberia in conformity with its mandate and with its status as agreed with the Transitional Government. We hope that the Liberian parties will show this willingness to fulfil their commitments.

My delegation considers that internal stabilization and progress in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement are the most important aspects of the peace process in Liberia. On that basis, we shall support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Security Council should extend the mandate of UNOMIL for a further four months.

Let me conclude by thanking the Governments of Ghana and Nigeria for their important cooperation in the peace process, through their participation in ECOMOG.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): My delegation appreciates the initiative of the President of the Council for this month, Sir John Weston, in arranging this orientation debate, and believes that this and future orientation debates in formal meetings of the Council will further enhance the Council's transparency and facilitate its democratization.

We are of the view that the issue at hand clearly warrants this type of open forum. Given the critical stage of the situation in Liberia, the continued attention of the international community is more necessary now than ever before. In this regard, my delegation commends the initiative and efforts of Ambassador Albright, who undertook an important mission to flashpoints in Africa, including Liberia. Her observations and sombre reflections should provide useful input for our debates.

My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for submitting his fifteenth progress report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). In particular, we express our appreciation to the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, and the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Anthony Nyakyi, for their strenuous efforts to facilitate the peace process in Liberia.

The peace-keeping operation in Liberia is unique in the sense that, for the first time in Africa, the subregional organization, ECOWAS, has taken a primary role, while the United Nations has assisted and monitored the activities of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

In some ways, the Liberian operation, together with the ongoing collaboration between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States in Georgia, can be regarded as a test case for the capability of countries in a given region and regional organizations to deal with their problems. The success of ECOMOG's involvement in close coordination with UNOMIL will set an example to be emulated elsewhere. In this regard, ECOMOG and UNOMIL deserve every encouragement and support from the international community.

The peace process, which began with the signing of the Abuja Agreement on 19 August 1995, is now at a critical juncture. Since late December, serious cease-fire violations have been committed by several Liberian factions. As a result of these renewed hostilities, many ECOMOG soldiers and innocent civilians have lost their lives. My delegation expresses its deep regret over these casualties and extends its sincere condolences to the troop contributing countries and to the families of those killed or wounded.

We are also very concerned at the further setback of the disarmament process caused by the Tubmanburg incident, which forced the withdrawal of peace-keepers from the area. This incident, however, must not be allowed to derail the peace process envisaged in the Abuja Agreement. In this connection, I should like to welcome the firm commitment to the Abuja Agreement reaffirmed by the Foreign Minister of Liberia through his statement this morning.

We strongly urge all factions, particularly ULIMO-J, to honour their commitments to the peace process and not to engage in any activities that may disrupt it.

The issue of disarmament and demobilization lies at the heart of the difficult situation in Liberia. We emphasize the importance of the faction leaders' role in ensuring the cooperation of their soldiers with ECOMOG and UNOMIL in the process of disarmament and demobilization. Without the successful disarmament and demobilization of the estimated 60,000 combatants, peace cannot prevail in the war-ravaged Liberian society.

My delegation is also of the view that the cooperation of the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) is essential for the success of the peace process in Liberia. In this context, the peace-keeping operation and humanitarian assistance in Liberia should enjoy full cooperation and coordination with the LNTG. We underline the LNTG's responsibility to ensure complete freedom of movement of those personnel in carrying out their work.

Despite the unfortunate aspects to which I have just alluded, there are some positive developments that have occurred during the last few months and that should not go unnoticed.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to appoint a senior electoral officer and notes with satisfaction that the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office has become fully operational in discharging its responsibility for the coordination of humanitarian assistance as well as the reintegration aspects of demobilization.

We are also pleased that the LNTG and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have concluded an agreement establishing the framework for the repatriation and reintegration of refugees, and hope that the voluntary return of refugees currently taking place in northern Liberia represents a growing trend.

Echoing the Secretary-General's notion, contained in the Agenda for Development, that development is a prerequisite for peace, we welcome the plan to convene a special consultation meeting of the LNTG and its international partners in March 1996 to address Liberia's recovery and reconstruction process.

As mentioned in the report, recent events in Liberia have caused serious concern and have regrettably delayed the implementation of the Abuja Agreement for more than two months. I believe that it is indeed time for all Liberian factions to renew their commitment to the peace process by adhering to the established timetable leading to elections seven months from now. Whether their country can become a land of liberty, peace and prosperity, as envisaged by their ancestors, is essentially in their hands.

This delegation is poignantly reminded of a recent article in *The New York Times* quoting General Charles Taylor, one of the faction leaders, in a conversation he reportedly had with Ambassador Albright in Monrovia last week regarding the seven-year-old Liberian civil war. He said:

"I started it and now I don't know how to stop it."

The answer to this fundamental question is plain and simple. All the factions concerned must abide by and implement the commitments they freely entered into in Abuja last summer.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): It is a great pleasure for my delegation to associate itself with previous speakers in expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his fifteenth progress report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) of 23 January 1996.

My delegation should like to welcome the Foreign Minister of Liberia and to thank him for his insightful statement. We also wish to express our gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Anthony Nyakyi, and to the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community's Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) for their continued endeavours towards the implementation of the Abuja Agreement. We similarly commend the personnel of UNOMIL for their efforts in the restoration of peace, security and stability in Liberia.

The signing of the Abuja Agreement in August 1995 gave the people of Liberia and the international community a sense of optimism that the six-year civil war, which has had catastrophic consequences, both human and economic, would be nearing its end. We were further encouraged by the action of the Security Council in November 1995 in adopting resolution 1020 (1995),

which we were confident would provide the foundation for renewed international support for the peace process.

Unfortunately, however, my delegation's budding optimism has been tempered by the recent report of the Secretary-General, which, on the whole, portrays a declining political, military and humanitarian situation. We deeply regret the tragic conflict that broke out in Tubmanburg, resulting from deep-seated suspicions between some factions, and the ensuing casualties that were suffered by the personnel of ECOMOG and the civilian population. May I therefore take this opportunity, on behalf of the Indonesian delegation, to extend our deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the ECOMOG soldiers who died in the fulfilment of their peace-keeping duties as well as to the families of the innocent civilians. The profoundly detrimental implications of this incident on the peace process cannot be underestimated. We also note and are concerned that serious cease-fire violations and skirmishes have occurred in other regions.

These events not only have caused further delays in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement but are, in our view, a clear indication of the necessity to further encourage confidence-building measures between the factions. In this context, we call upon the Liberian leadership to demonstrate genuine political will to get the peace process back on track and to discard the logic of war in resolving its differences. My delegation therefore wishes to reiterate that the international community cannot be expected to support the peace process in Liberia indefinitely in the absence of a clear determination on the part of the factions to abide by and implement the commitments they themselves have undertaken.

My delegation believes that a secure peace will continue to prove elusive without the implementation of the detailed disarmament and demobilization plan elaborated by UNOMIL and ECOMOG in consultation with the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG), the factions and the humanitarian community. We are, however, keenly aware of the interlinkages of the various aspects involved, as alluded to by the Secretary-General in paragraph 43 of his report, that the success of the demobilization process depends on the opportunities of the ex-combatants reintegrating into civilian life, while the success of the reintegration process requires a revitalized economy that can only be achieved within a safe and secure environment.

Such an environment can be attained only through a successful process of disarmament. To this end, it is imperative that the international community step up its efforts, without delay, in providing the necessary resources in order to avert the potential spread of this conflict. We stress the need in this instance to focus on preventive diplomacy and peacemaking as measures to deter further outbreaks of conflict such as occurred in Tubmanburg.

We are encouraged that the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office is now fully operational, is engaged in the process of providing humanitarian assistance and is designing programmes and activities that will lead to the reintegration of the demobilized. We believe, therefore, that it is paramount that efforts be undertaken in a meaningful manner to address adequately the economic deprivations that so often provide the catalyst for resorting to violence.

It is in this connection that we would like to echo the Secretary-General's call to the LNTG to provide its full support and enlist the support of the Liberian factions to assist in this critical endeavour.

While the recent record in Liberia has provided ample opportunity for disappointment, we can nevertheless foresee the possibility of hope on the horizon. Our feeling of encouragement emanates from several elements.

Firstly, we note the recent steps taken by the Secretary-General to prepare for the legislative and presidential elections that are scheduled to take place before the end of August 1996, as provided for in the Abuja Agreement.

Secondly, we observe that, on 3 January 1996, the LNTG and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees concluded an agreement establishing a framework for the repatriation and reintegration of refugees.

Thirdly, continued cooperation prevails between UNOMIL and the LNTG and with other United Nations agencies and local and international non-governmental organizations to facilitate support for the Liberian judicial system and human rights groups.

Fourthly, a coordinated effort on the part of the international community is beginning to take place to address reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

These, in our opinion, are an appropriate framework and conducive to moving the peace process forward.

It is against this backdrop, and after careful consideration and analysis, that my delegation fully concurs with the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNOMIL for a period of four months, until 31 May 1996.

As I have explained, we, along with the rest of the Council, are disappointed and frustrated by the continued violations of the cease-fire agreement and the slow progress made in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement. These serious considerations, however, should not overshadow the progress that has been made. Moreover, a withdrawal at this point would send the wrong signal to the parties about the international community's resolve in this matter, and would certainly undermine confidence in ECOMOG. Given the enormous potential that exists to further the peace process, we feel that this is no time to set the unsavoury precedent of withdrawing support when it is needed most.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): I thank the Secretary-General for the report concerning the situation in Liberia contained in the document S/1996/147.

Let me also express my delegation's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for initiating this orientation meeting on Liberia, which is providing a useful opportunity to exchange views on the subject and to acquire new information. We are glad to see His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Liberia among us, and we welcome his determination to succeed in the rapid achievement of peace in his country. We are also grateful to Ambassador Albright for her reflections on her visit to Liberia and on the most recent developments in the conflict area.

It is with great interest that we have acquainted ourselves with the report before us, especially since it is focused on the period in which the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was fulfilling its adjusted mandate in conformity with Security Council resolution 1020 (1995) of 10 November 1995.

This resolution also serves as a valid point of reference in our debate today, since in its preambular part the Security Council notes some positive trends in the development of the situation, such as the progress towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Liberia and the determination of the parties involved to maintain peace and stability within the State.

Unfortunately, the fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on UNOMIL does not confirm that those processes have been lasting ones. Our delegation remains particularly concerned by breaches of the cease-fire agreement: the Tubmanburg incident, as a result of which 16 Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) members lost their lives, is a most serious violation of the Abuja Agreement of 19 August 1995. It is regrettable that it has been followed by other cease-fire violations and by other assaults on ECOMOG centres and personnel.

It is evident that the Tubmanburg event contributed to an escalation of tensions throughout the country: it undermined confidence between the political and the armed groups, and by increasing the military threat caused significant delay in the planned deployment of ECOMOG and UNOMIL. It also adversely affected the humanitarian situation for the population. As a result of the incident, the confidence of the international community in the lasting character and momentum of the peace process in Liberia has been seriously weakened.

The Polish delegation welcomes the activities undertaken by the Liberian National Transitional Government, the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Liberia to defuse the incident and to ensure the prompt release of the civilians and ECOMOG soldiers who have been detained. We express our sincere hope that these activities will alleviate the situation in the region, and will have a positive effect on the overall situation in Liberia.

We would also like to refer to those parts of the report which allow us some hope that the political process in Liberia will go forward despite the delays. Specifically, we attach great importance to the existing political dialogue. The importance of that dialogue can hardly be overestimated.

Humanitarian assistance is being provided and it is expanding into areas that have been inaccessible so far. We wish to underline the role of the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office in this respect.

The voluntary repatriation of refugees is a significant factor in providing fresh impetus for the renewed cultivation of abandoned land.

We also welcome the latest phase of consultations concerning the programme of disarmament and demobilization of combatants.

Let me state clearly that the present moment appears crucial for the future of the peace process in Liberia. The major responsibility for developments in the country lies with the political parties, and a successful defusing of the crisis that has arisen after the Tubmanburg incident and the further implementation of the Abuja agreement depend, ultimately, on their political will. Similarly, we can say that the fate of their country is contingent upon their degree of maturity and responsibility.

I should also like to stress the importance of continued action by regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Organization of African Unity, both of which are already deeply involved in the peace process in Liberia.

Let me also emphasize the fact that the region's ability to fulfil its important mission in the conflict area depends also on material and logistic support that is to be provided by the international community. We should spare no effort to enhance the peace process in Liberia.

We should also rest secure in the conviction that, thanks to the sincere will of the warring parties, the international community's involvement and contribution will not be in vain.

The President: I thank the representative of Poland for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): As this is my first statement at a formal meeting of the Security Council this January, I should like to congratulate you on your assumption of your duties as President of the Council for this month.

I express also my gratitude to all my colleagues for their kind words addressed to the Russian delegation concerning our tenure of the presidency of the Security Council last month.

The Russian delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his detailed report on Liberia. We welcome the presence among us of the Foreign Minister of Liberia and welcome also the important speech he delivered.

Unfortunately, the information coming out of Liberia, including the information we have heard today, tells of serious hold-ups in the peace process, and this is cause for serious concern. There has been no real progress in the processes of separation of forces, disarmament and demobilization of combatants. Not only that — as the Secretary-General points out in his report — there are some armed groupings trying to re-establish control over the self-same points from which their forces had previously been withdrawn.

We firmly condemn the armed attacks that have resulted in so many casualties among the peace-keeping personnel of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). We express our deep condolences to their families.

Events in the Tubmanburg area have acutely worsened the situation in Liberia and halted the further deployment of ECOMOG divisions and United Nations military observers, thus jeopardizing the peace process as a whole. We cannot accept the Liberian factions' attempts to justify their attacks on the peace-keepers and the absence of progress towards a political settlement by alleging that the world community has not provided them with sufficient funds to secure the peace process. The international community is actively working for peace in Liberia, as can be seen in the joint actions of ECOWAS, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations, as well as in the efforts of many individual States, the most recent example of which was the visit to the region by the Permanent Representative of the United States, Ambassador Albright.

However, it is clear that lasting peace, stability and national reconciliation cannot be imported from the exterior. The key to success in the peace process in Liberia is in the hands of the Liberians themselves. We would venture to hope that their current leaders have sufficient political will and wisdom to be able, through joint efforts, to get their country out of this vicious circle of violence and bloodshed.

The task of the international community, as we see it, is to give them all possible assistance in this regard. The Russian Federation calls upon all Liberian parties to cooperate fully with ECOMOG and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in the performance of their duties and to fulfil the obligations they voluntarily accepted under the Abuja Agreement.

The Russian delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that UNOMIL's mandate be extended for four months. We expect that by the end of March the Secretary-General will have presented for the Security Council's consideration an interim report on developments in the process, including an analysis of

matters connected with preparations for the elections in Liberia, scheduled for August of this year.

The Liberian parties should understand clearly that the patience of the international community is not boundless and that the Security Council cannot go on endlessly extending the mandate and authority of UNOMIL. Further active support by the international community for the peace process in Liberia will depend to a decisive degree on whether the Liberian parties are actually able to demonstrate the political will to normalize the situation in the country and to fulfil faithfully the provisions of the Abuja Agreement.

It is important to all of us that a political settlement in Liberia should soon be crowned with complete success. We believe that the experience gained in that country of practical interaction between the United Nations, the OAU and ECOWAS can be usefully applied to other peace-keeping operations and can constitute an important contribution to the development of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Mano Queta (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Guinea-Bissau would like, through you, Mr. President, to congratulate the Secretary-General on his commitment to the cause of Africa and his activities in that connection, particularly concerning Liberia. We wish to pay a heartfelt tribute to all the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States for their dedication to and support for the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) since it was created with a view to facilitating the process of restoring peace and achieving national reconciliation in Liberia.

We take this opportunity to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia and to assure him of Guinea-Bissau's fellowship and its willingness to work for peace and national reconciliation his friendly and brotherly country. We thank him for the information he has provided us concerning the current situation in Liberia.

Guinea-Bissau, a country of the same subregion, is deeply concerned by the slow implementation of the peace process in that brotherly country. My country has always followed with special interest the development of the situation, and it welcomed the signing of the Abuja Agreement and the establishment of the Council of State.

We wish to reiterate our satisfaction at and support for the memorandum of understanding signed on 30 November 1995, and we urge the parties to the conflict to continue along the path of peace and national reconciliation, to work for the reconstruction of the country and to refrain from any action that could undermine respect for the terms of the cease-fire established under the Abuja Agreement.

However, we regret the incidents that took place in Tubmanburg on 28 December, and we deplore the deaths of several members of ECOMOG and of innocent civilians.

Guinea-Bissau is firmly convinced that the political will of all the parties concerned is a *sine qua non* for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. None the less, we also consider that the firm and continued support of the international community is necessary in order to speed up the peace process. This would alleviate the suffering of the population, which has already gone on for too long.

In this context, we appeal urgently to the international community to keep the promise it made at the Conference on Assistance to Liberia, held on 27 October 1995 here in New York.

The problem of refugees and displaced persons is of crucial importance and deserves the special attention of the international community. As the Council knows, Guinea-Bissau has already taken in a great many of them, which has repercussions on its fragile economic situation. There should be a minimal guarantee of security and stability so that they can voluntarily and spontaneously return.

In this connection, we wish to pay a tribute to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to the non-governmental organizations for their activities on the ground, at times in extremely difficult conditions, and to reiterate our full support for them.

In conclusion, we would like to express our unreserved support for the proposals made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 8 of his report, relating to the elections envisaged under the Abuja Agreement, and in paragraph 45, concerning the extension of the mandate of United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for a period of four months. We also wish to reaffirm our desire to see the parties to the conflict

resolve their differences through constructive dialogue that could contribute to national reconciliation.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on having put on the Council's agenda the item on the situation in Liberia, thus giving us the opportunity to hold this debate, open to all the States Members of the United Nations. Many thanks.

We are grateful for the very thorough report of the Secretary-General, which contains a very interesting paragraph on the efforts of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions to cooperate in the economic and social development of Liberia. Without such cooperation, any political agreement would have a very flimsy foundation.

I am also grateful for the presence here of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia.

This being the first time we have made a formal statement on the activities of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), I wish to emphasize the enormous importance we attach to the peace process and to reconstruction in Liberia. This national and regional effort supported by the United Nations has, in general, shown positive results, and, until the occurrence of the recent events on which I shall comment later, it symbolized the way in which complementary regional, national and international efforts can be coordinated to bring peace and stability to a country.

In fact, and in the first place, the parties to the conflict, after many disagreements, have concluded a series of agreements, beginning with Yamoussoukro and Cotonou proceeding to the Abuja Agreement of last year, thus setting the course of a peace process.

Secondly, the African region, through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the political follow-up of the situation by friendly, concerned countries, such as Ghana and Nigeria, among others, has made a direct commitment to the peace aspirations of the people of Liberia.

Thirdly and finally, the international community, through UNOMIL, humanitarian cooperation, support for the needs of economic and social development and the monitoring of human rights and the electoral process, *inter alia*, is strengthening national and regional efforts. In this context, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ambassador Nyakyi, has been of fundamental importance.

Thus, from the standpoint of the United Nations, this three-pronged design is the best one for the Organization's intervention in areas of conflict. However, as always and as has been made clear by the analysis of the situation we have heard this morning reality is much more complex than the design. However, we must point out that, considering the situation that obtained in the country in the recent past, the peace process was making relatively good progress, even with the delays and setbacks that we all acknowledge, towards the elections to be held in August 1996.

This is why, in addition to the hopes raised by the circumstances I have mentioned, we must express immense regret at the acts of violence that have occurred since 28 December and the shadow of mistrust they have cast. In the report we are considering today, the Secretary-General presents a somewhat chilling account of the suffering of the civilian population in Liberia, and this gives rise to our deepest concern. This deplorable resurgence of violence, together with the delay in disarmament and demobilization, is in no way in keeping with the expectations aroused by the signing of the Abuja Agreement, and it naturally casts doubt on the credibility of its signatories.

It is essential that the relatively calm situation achieved before these violations of the cease-fire be restored. But it is obvious that without displays of genuine political will to carry out successfully the peace process in Liberia, the international community would be less enthusiastic about maintaining support for the activities required to do so.

We especially regret the suffering of the civilian population, in particular the loss of human life, the forced displacement of citizens and the unfortunate recurrence, in a United Nations peace-keeping operation, of the use of human shields, as a result of the fighting in Tubmanburg and Kle. In this context, we wish to highlight the efforts that were under way before the latest outbreak of violence to facilitate the return of the 750,000 Liberian refugees.

We must pay special tribute to the forces of ECOMOG and express our solidarity with it and our condolences for those recently killed and wounded. It is essential for ECOMOG to have a status-of-forces

agreement that strengthens its security so that its deployment may be completed as soon as possible.

In view of all these considerations, we wish to support the Secretary-General's proposal and declare ourselves in favour of a new extension of UNOMIL, and, in particular, we agree with the final observations made by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 41 to 45 of his report.

We believe that one last effort by the United Nations is required to consolidate the wide-ranging advances that have been made towards peace and make it possible for all these efforts to reach the desired conclusion.

As we can all see, we are at a decisive point in this process. With a view to the holding of the legislative and presidential elections on 20 August next, we must maintain support for UNOMIL and strengthen the hope shared by all that peace among Liberians, with the support of the region and the international community, will be possible.

In conclusion, we appeal to the leaders of the various factions to place the interests of the human beings, families and civilian communities of Liberia above their own political, personal, group or factional interests — legitimate though they may seem — because ultimately, as I believe all of us in this Chamber agree, only Liberia can bring peace to Liberia.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United Kingdom.

My delegation joins others in thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). There are some positive aspects to the Secretary-General's report, particularly the Transitional Government's declaration on the right of refugees to return in safety; refugee return is an important step towards normalization. But on the whole, the report makes sombre reading, and its contents are made more vivid for us by what we have heard this morning of Ambassador Albright's first-hand impressions.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about cease-fire violations, particularly the serious incident of fighting in Tubmanburg at the end of last month. My delegation deeply regrets the loss of life among the forces of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). We are outraged that peace-keeping forces should be subjected to attack and we join the Secretary-General in extending condolences to the countries and families of those concerned. We believe that ECOMOG is right not to deploy further until the factions can provide concrete guarantees for the safety of their personnel.

The Secretary-General's report of human rights violations in Liberia is also deeply worrying. The use of civilians as human shields is totally unacceptable. My delegation would be grateful for any information from the Secretariat on the situation of civilians trapped between ECOMOG and ULIMO-J forces outside Kle.

It is the responsibility of the Council of State to ensure that the terms of the Abuja Agreement are adhered to. There is a danger that the Tubmanburg and similar incidents, as well as ULIMO-J inter-factional fighting, will cause the Abuja Agreement to unravel country-wide. In this respect, we agree with previous speakers that disarmament and demobilization procedures are crucial. We hope that UNOMIL and ECOMOG can start this process as soon as possible. The onus is on the Council of State and the leaders of all the factions to ensure that all parties cooperate.

My delegation recognizes that the Abuja timetable might well slip. In this context, we believe that an extension of UNOMIL's mandate to 31 May is necessary and agree with the Secretary-General's recommendations. But all in Liberia must understand that the continued commitment of the international community depends on the willingness of the factions to observe the cease-fire, disengage, disarm and demobilize; in other words, to make concrete progress towards peace.

My delegation would also draw the Council's attention to the scale of arrears built up in UNOMIL, as well as in peace-keeping more generally. If peace-keeping operations are to fulfil their mandates they must receive the necessary funding in full and on time.

With that, I resume my function as President of the Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Senegal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cissé (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): Permit me first of all, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. I also wish to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Lavrov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for his work

last month. I also wish to thank the members of the Council for having kindly allowed me to speak at this meeting.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/1996/47, dated 23 January 1996, confirms the precariousness of the situation in Liberia. The Tubmanburg incident and its negative consequences for the security situation reveal all the difficulty and complexity of the situation on the ground. The events described by the Secretary-General in his report underscore the need for control of the situation in its military and security aspects so that the peace process in which the parties are freely engaged can have a real chance.

It is on the basis of this conviction that we that wish to seize the opportunity offered by this meeting of the Security Council to launch an appeal to the international community to supply the troops of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) with the necessary material and logistical means for their deployment throughout the entire country, in accordance with the Abuja Agreement of 19 August 1995.

We believe that the success of the important efforts and sacrifices agreed to in regional and international plans to restore peace to Liberia depends in large measure, at this crucial stage of the process, on the capacity of ECOMOG and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them.

My delegation welcomes the efforts made by the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, His Excellency Mr. Jerry Rawlings, President of the Republic of Ghana, as well as by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, his Special Representative and the countries of the region, to restore calm and avoid escalation.

The Tubmanburg incident has also made acutely apparent the need for the full cooperation of the faction leaders in the implementation of the agreements freely entered into. In this regard, the signing of an agreement to clarify ECOMOG's status in Liberia could constitute a first step in this direction, as the Secretary-General emphasizes in his report.

In the current Liberian context, the presence of the international community, through ECOMOG and UNOMIL, constitutes an essential condition for bringing peace to Liberia and putting an end to the suffering of the Liberian people.

The Secretary-General's recommendation, contained in paragraph 45 of his report, that the Security Council consider the extension of UNOMIL's mandate for a period of four months, until 31 May 1996, deserves the support of the Council.

Before that date, shortly before the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for 20 August 1996, the deployment of ECOMOG and UNOMIL, as well as disarmament and demobilization, should have been completed so that security will be improved.

My delegation wishes very sincerely to thank the Secretary-General for all the steps he has taken with a view to preparing for the elections to be held in the best possible conditions and, in particular, his plan to send a technical mission to work with the National Transitional Government, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ECOWAS in order to finalize a framework for the monitoring and verification of the electoral process.

We also welcome the remarkable work carried out every day, frequently in dangerous conditions on the ground, by local and foreign humanitarian organizations and the various programmes, United Nations organs and international institutions to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population and to aid in the rebuilding of the country.

It is important to note that in areas that are enjoying a return to security — in particular, near the Guinean border — the refugees are beginning to return to their villages, and normal economic activity is being resumed.

My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General's observation that the return to peace will depend largely on a revitalization of the economic sector that generates opportunities for the successful reintegration of former military personnel into civilian life.

For the moment, we must create the security conditions essential for the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, with a view to the restoration of peace in Liberia. In this regard, it is important that the leaders of the factions and the National Transitional Government undertake to cooperate fully with ECOMOG and UNOMIL. This open cooperation with the international community, called for by the Secretary-General, constitutes the condition *sine qua non* for the pursuit of

the peace process, which is the only guarantee of the country's survival. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the positive steps announced earlier by the Liberian Foreign Minister.

I would like to conclude by paying a well-deserved tribute to the men and women of ECOMOG, UNOMIL and the humanitarian organizations, who risk their lives everyday for the return of peace to Liberia, and I bow my head in memory of those who have died for the cause of Liberia.

The President: I thank the representative of Senegal for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Gambia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia): I would first of all like to join my colleagues who have already spoken in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also wish to thank you and all the members of this body for kindly facilitating my delegation's participation in the consideration of this important agenda item, on the situation in Liberia, at this open meeting. Under your wise guidance and competent leadership, I have no doubt that our deliberations will yield fruitful results.

I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation for the Council's previous expression of support for the people of Liberia and its recognition of the useful role the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been playing in finding a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Liberian conflict. The Council's support is a great source of encouragement to Liberians in particular, and all Africans in general, in their resolute effort to resolve the problem in Liberia and its attendant human sufferings and material damage.

I would also like to extend my delegation's sincere thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his now-familiar request to the international community for humanitarian assistance to Liberia. This gesture and other commitments of the United Nations to Liberia and its rehabilitation process strike a deep chord of gratitude in our hearts, and we wholeheartedly wish to express our thanks to all those who have been contributing financially and materially to this noble and humane objective.

In the same vein, I would like to convey my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for the excellent report now before the Security Council.

It is gratifying to note that the situation in Liberia is beginning to improve once more, following the recent regrettable setbacks in the peace process. The incident at Tubmanburg dealt a serious blow to the peace process. These incidents or setbacks notwithstanding, the Abuja Agreement is generally holding, with every effort being made for its continued implementation. This is an encouraging sign for the international community, and therefore calls for renewed and redoubled support and assistance. In particular, there is a great need to strengthen and continue the peace process in Liberia by maintaining the presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and by providing greater financial and material resources to ensure a sustained programme of national recovery and reconstruction.

Turning to the report of the Secretary-General, which my delegation fully supports, we note that the Secretary-General addresses a number of serious issues relating to the peace process and to the need to keep it constantly on track. The general picture that emerges from this report shows that all is not lost. The various organs necessary for implementing the Abuja Agreement are in place and functioning. Socio-economic activities are going on, and it is noted that many United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations are continuing their professional and humanitarian activities in Liberia.

My delegation also notes the ongoing efforts to stem the spreading tide of military clashes and other violations of the Abuja Agreement, and violations of the human rights of civilians. In this connection, my delegation calls on the recalcitrant local warlords to pledge once more their commitment to the peace process and strict adherence to its various provisions ensuring progress towards general elections in August this year.

Attainment of the goals of the Abuja Agreement requires that we support the recommendations made by the Secretary-General. The Gambia supports the Secretary-General's recommendations, contained in paragraph 45 of his report (S/1996/47), to extend the mandate of UNOMIL for a period of four months, until 31 May 1996, and to complete the full deployment of the Mission. My delegation would also like to echo the Secretary-General's appeal to the international community to reconsider and increase its current level of support to

the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), and to ensure that the necessary logistical assistance is provided to enable it to carry out its demanding responsibilities in Liberia.

It is fitting at this stage to pay tribute to ECOMOG for its heroic work in Liberia and to extend our deepest condolences to the families of all its members who have been killed in the line of duty. This is a noble sacrifice that is not lost on us, and to which we pay due tribute. We also express our thanks and our heartfelt sympathy to all United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations that have suffered various setbacks, some of them tragic, in the execution of their onerous duties in Liberia. We sympathize with the families of those civilians who have been killed.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to express solidarity with the people of Liberia and to assure them of the Gambia's continued support and assistance.

The President: I thank the representative of the Gambia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Ghana. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamptey (Ghana): Let me join in congratulating you, Sir, on the work you are doing as President of the Security Council. I wish also to thank you for this opportunity to address the Security Council once more on the question of Liberia, a subject of great importance to my country and to other African countries.

Only four months ago, in mid-September 1995, I had the honour to inform the Council of the positive developments in Liberia: the signing of the Abuja Agreement on 19 August 1995 by all the parties to the Liberian conflict, in which they agreed to lay down their arms and work towards peace in their country. In my statement then, I noted that after many false starts and failures, we could see the light at the end of the tunnel leading to the end of the six-year-old fratricidal war in Liberia. I called on the international community to shoulder its responsibility to turn the hope for permanent peace into reality.

I briefed the Security Council about the programme of actions that would lead to free and fair elections in Liberia on the road to ordered civil life, of which the Liberian people have been robbed for over half a decade. On behalf of the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), President J. J. Rawlings of Ghana, I called on the United Nations to assume a more active role in pursuing peace in Liberia, by urgently making available the resources needed to preserve the positive momentum for peace, which we would have an uphill task to restore once lost.

The importance of an early solution to the Liberian problem was underscored by the convening of the Conference on Assistance to Liberia, co-chaired by the Secretary-General, the current Chairman of ECOWAS and the Chairman of the Liberian Council of State, on 27 October 1995. At that pledging conference, all speakers — representatives of some of our countries — underlined the urgent need for financial and logistical assistance to the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and to Liberia if the ambitious peace programme was to be successfully implemented. We are most grateful for the assistance pledged at the Conference and for assistance offered since then by some concerned States. However, I regret to note that not only are the pledges slow to be redeemed, but the amounts offered are grossly inadequate and do not reflect the expressed sentiment of the international community that it wishes to see the Liberian conflict put behind us.

We do not ask for much. But, at the risk of flogging a dead horse, let me echo the words of my Head of State at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations:

> "We cannot help being struck by the fact that the international community is willing to spend $5 million a day on United Nations peace-keeping operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina — and we do not begrudge those noble people such international solidarity ... — but when we have asked for a sum that represents 10 to 15 days of that bill to help [Liberia], there is a deafening silence". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 38th meeting, p. 3)*

ECOMOG troop contributors and ECOWAS member countries are determined to pursue the objective of peace in Liberia, even at great cost to our struggling national economies. Let me say that my President restated the commitment firmly just a couple of weeks ago, saying that no matter what happened in Liberia Ghana and ECOMOG would stay there to see the attainment of the objective of peace and civil society there. Our need for logistical and financial contributions

to ECOMOG from the countries represented here continues to be paramount. We insist that the international community, represented by the Security Council, has yet to show enough interest in the situation in Liberia, which, compared to the situation in other zones of conflict, does not demand too much for a successful resolution.

Where do we stand now? As has been made abundantly clear, the reluctance of the international community to pay serious attention to Liberia with material assistance is beginning to reflect negatively on the peace process. The report of the Secretary-General says it all. The lack of resources means that ECOMOG has not been able to deploy troops all over the country as quickly as desired. The disarmament and demobilization of combatants remain behind schedule, and the skirmishes between some factions and ECOMOG have led to casualties on all sides and among the civilian population, a situation which it is within the reach of the international community to halt.

The Liberian national Council has reiterated its commitment to continue cooperating with ECOMOG and UNOMIL to keep the peace process on track, and we in ECOMOG are determined to continue our search for peace. I would say that the light at the end of the tunnel, which we all applauded in the last quarter of 1995, is beginning to grow dim. But there is still hope and we can build on the successes that we have so far achieved.

Let us take this meeting as another opportunity, another step by the international community to seek concrete assistance for ECOMOG and the Liberian people. In that part of the world, the effective maintenance of international peace and security is within our reach. This opportunity should not be allowed to slip away. Let us grasp it and with concrete deeds assure the people of Liberia a quick return to permanent peace and normality, which, like all of us, they rightly deserve, and they expect of us. It is our common responsibility, and we cannot afford to fail.

The President: I thank the representative of Ghana for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Guinea. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Camara (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): I wish at the outset to offer you my warmest congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for January. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, and to reiterate the support and gratitude of my country, the Republic of Guinea, and particularly its President, General Lansana Conté, to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose initiatives, actions and resolve continue to help counter the dynamic of war and sometimes to avert it altogether in many countries whose populations face the danger of the sort of fratricidal conflict we have seen in Liberia. Lastly, I wish through you, Mr. President, to thank the other members of the Security Council and all those who, in the field and sometimes at great risk and peril, are helping to restore peace in Liberia.

My country's vulnerability to the collateral effects of the situation in Liberia is hardly surprising, given the historical and geographical links between our two peoples. Beyond this aspect, and aware of its twofold position as a founding member of the Mano River Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), my country continues to play a very active role in the Community's Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and to shelter more than 600,000 Liberian refugees in its territory. Moreover, in bringing the leaders of all the Liberian factions together in Conakry last November, my Government again gave proof of its determination to work for the restoration of lasting peace in that brotherly country. That is why, having studied the Secretary-General's very informative report, my delegation feels that the dividing line between respect for and violation of the Abuja Agreement has grown so tenuous that, given its particular urgency, the situation in Liberia requires renewed thoughtful consideration rather than hasty or improvised measures.

Though we must welcome the clear resolve of all factions to implement the Abuja Agreement, it would be naive to believe that, without the political support, and particularly the financial and logistical support, of the international community, such incidents as that which occurred in Tubmanburg, and which we deeply deplore, will not recur simply because the protagonists have given their word.

In endorsing the Secretary-General's recommendations, I should like to ask the Council, first, to consider extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for an additional four-month period; secondly, to appeal to the Liberian National Transitional Government and the faction leaders to extend their full cooperation to ECOWAS and

UNOMIL in order to stabilize the situation and make rapid progress in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, since elections are scheduled for August 1996; thirdly, to call on the international community to continue providing the resources which ECOMOG requires to carry out its responsibilities effectively; fourthly, to urge those who are helping to finance disarmament and demobilization operations to invest in socio-economic projects so as to ease the reintegration of ex-combatants; fifthly, to consider offering protection and humanitarian assistance to the displaced populations and refugees within Liberia and to Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries, such as Guinea; and, lastly, to call on the international community to give renewed priority consideration to its support for ECOMOG and to ensure that the necessary assistance is extended to that force.

To put the Liberian situation into context, we must not forget that, as we speak, hundreds of thousands of Liberian refugees and displaced persons are dying of hunger and disease. The task before the international community is certainly enormous, but not impossible. We must understand that what remains to be done can be done only if we work together to silence the guns in Liberia, where for the first time a group of African countries is committed to settling a regional conflict.

For the sake of the mission of peace, solidarity and social order to which we are all duty-bound, let us agree once and for all to come to the aid of the Liberian people in order to make it possible for them in the near future to live in a world of justice and harmony.

The President: I thank the representative of Guinea for her kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Togo. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ta'ama (Togo) (*interpretation from French*): The Togolese delegation would first of all like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the skill with which you are conducting the Security Council's deliberations, and to thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak before the Council on the situation in Liberia.

We wish particularly to thank the Secretary-General for his most thorough report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, which covers developments in the situation in Liberia since the report of 18 December 1995 (S/1995/1042), and the implementation of UNOMIL's new mandate.

As we read the report, there is a temptation to believe that the hopes born out of the peace process set in motion by the signing of the Abuja Agreement in August 1995 are on the road to extinction, and we are tempted to say to ourselves that once again the rock of Sisyphus has rolled back down. Indeed, while the international community as a whole welcomed the signing of the Agreement to the point of showing its satisfaction in concrete terms by pledging substantial contributions at the last Conference on Assistance to Liberia, and while the States Members of the Economic Community of West African States saw their tireless efforts to put an end to the violence and chaos in Liberia as finally being rewarded, were we to be forced to accept the idea that we had been wrong and that the dogs of war would again win out over the forces behind the momentum for peace? Naturally, my delegation's response is that no, we have not been wrong.

In our view, the hardest part came after the Agreement had been signed. Six months cannot wipe out the rancour, the frustrations, the ambitions and the hatred of a war so rich in atrocity as the one in Liberia. Confidence cannot be restored as easily as it was once destroyed. The cease-fire violations that have taken place here and there are, if I may say so, par for the course.

You can be sure, Mr. President, that it give me no pleasure to say what I am about to, but I shall do so because I believe I have to, because I must appeal to the members of the Security Council and, through them, to the international community not to yield yet again to the prevailing mood of afro-pessimism and make Liberia yet another orphan of peace.

The mandate the Council granted UNOMIL — which my delegation welcomes — under resolution 1020 (1995) of 10 November 1995 is a good and relevant one; what it needs is more effort and more will to carry it out.

Thus, our efforts in respect of the factions must be directed towards prevailing on them to respect fully the commitments they entered into, of their own free will, at Abuja, and to relearn the reflexes of peace. It is up to the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and UNOMIL to play their allotted roles to the full, despite the risks and dangers, in

disarming the troops, in cantoning them in their allotted areas and in reintegrating the former combatants.

My delegation reaffirms that it is entirely the responsibility of the Council of State to seek ways and means, in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement, to maintain the momentum of the peace process and establish the necessary basic conditions for genuine national reconciliation in Liberia.

Taking our lead from the Secretary-General, we can remind the international community as a whole that the peace process that was set in motion thanks to its exemplary support is now at a crucial turning-point. The international community's support is therefore once again needed to counter the setbacks that have occurred in implementing the peace Agreement. That being the case, and if the financial resources are sufficient, there can be no doubt that the various players will shoulder their responsibilities, be they ECOMOG, UNOMIL, United Nations institutions or the non-governmental organizations working in the fields of human rights, and humanitarian law, or on the return of refugees or the elections to establish a democratic regime.

For its part, the Government of Togo, and the President of the Republic in particular, General Gnassingbé Eyadéma, have on no occasion held back in their efforts to contribute whatever they could to solving this sad crisis. They will continue to do so in the full awareness — and this is something our President never fails to stress — that Togo cannot go unscathed when it is its neighbour's house that is on fire. It is this same awareness, moreover, that has led the President, since the beginning of the crisis, to keep his door open to any faction that wishes to meet with him.

In conclusion, my delegation once again thanks the Security Council for its involvement, which has been crucial to the quest for a solution to the Liberian crisis, and hopes that the Council will extend UNOMIL's mandate, in so far as it is quite clear that more time is needed to make up for the delays in the timetable for implementing the Abuja Agreement.

In expressing this hope, my delegation would nevertheless remind the signatories to that Agreement, specifically, the various factions, that restoring peace depends first and foremost on no one but themselves, and that the international community obviously cannot support a peace process indefinitely if they themselves do not clearly demonstrate the political will to respect and implement the commitments they freely entered into. In this connection, the statement by the Foreign Minister of Liberia, for which we thank him, gives us hope.

The President: I thank the representative for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): Mr. President, the delegation of Nigeria welcomes you to the presidency of the Security Council during this month of January, and takes advantage of this opportunity to acknowledge with appreciation the professional manner in which Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation conducted the business of Council last month.

We welcome Chile, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Poland and the Republic of Korea as new members of the Council.

The current report of the Secretary-General, the fifteenth in the series, represents a further step in the continuing efforts by the international community to help solve the seemingly intractable conflict in Liberia. It has been submitted in pursuance of Security Council resolution 1014 (1995) of 15 September 1995, which extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 31 January 1996, and of resolution 1020 (1995) of 10 November 1995, which adjusted UNOMIL's mandate and approved a new concept of operations for it.

We have just listened to the very important statement by the Foreign Minister of Liberia on the current situation in his country. We thank him for his candour and objectivity in presenting a Liberian perspective on the subject matter before the Council. We cannot agree more with the view that the Liberian peace process needs to be assisted if it is to result in the consolidation of peace, thus clearing the way for national reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Six years ago, Nigeria's efforts to bring peace to Liberia culminated in the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), an international military intervention force of West African States under the authority of the Heads of State of ECOWAS. ECOMOG, which blazed the trail for subregional endeavours in crisis

management and conflict resolution, was conceived as a complement to the political and diplomatic efforts which were being deployed to find a just and lasting solution to the Liberian crisis.

Over the years, the several accords which had been painstakingly arrived at to resolve the Liberian crisis had failed to bring an early end to the conflict. From the failure of the Banjul accord to the collapse of the Bamako accord, to the failures of the four successive Yamoussoukro Accords and the Geneva accord, all efforts to resolve the Liberian crisis were frustrated by the failure of the parties to reach accommodation through compromise. Another round of accords, in Cotonou, Akosombo, and Accra, in spite of their promise, failed to bring the desired peace to Liberia. It was therefore a matter of satisfaction for my Government to have successfully hosted the Abuja meeting in August last year, which resulted in a breakthrough in the Liberian conflict.

Today we have a functioning Government in Liberia and a cease-fire which is generally holding. We would like to congratulate that Government for its continuing efforts to establish its authority throughout the territory and conduct the business of governance.

We are delighted to note that ECOMOG and UNOMIL do not see themselves in competition but, rather, in cooperation in Liberia. That is as it should be. UNOMIL's role can find form, content and import only if it collaborates with ECOMOG. In other words, it is only when ECOMOG is able, or enabled, to fulfil its role and carry out its responsibilities that UNOMIL can have any impact in Liberia. We all desire that UNOMIL should have such an impact. Liberia, as a faithful member of the international community, deserves to have such a United Nations presence in its territory, and it has so requested as it tries to deal with its political crisis. In this connection, we cannot but draw attention to the failure of the international community to deliver on its commitment to provide a force level of 160 military observers, as against the current level of only 82 such observers in Liberia.

We are greatly concerned about the continuing incidence of cease-fire violations and the slow pace of disarmament and demobilization of forces in Liberia. We are particularly distressed to note that the peace process in that country suffered a major setback with the attack on ECOMOG in Tubmanburg in December 1995 by General Roosevelt Johnson's wing of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO-J), resulting in a number of casualties, including Nigerians. The Government of Nigeria hopes that those responsible for this atrocity will be brought expeditiously to justice so that those of its countrymen who have paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of peace in Liberia shall not have died in vain.

A clear message must issue from the Security Council to the Liberian parties that they cannot hold the peace process in Liberia hostage to their personal whims or political ambitions. The Liberian people are definitely tired of war. They desire peace, and peace must be given a chance. Besides, the countries of the subregion are straining to keep ECOMOG afloat, and countries such as mine, in spite of our domestic preoccupations and current circumstances, are determined that ECOMOG must succeed. ECOMOG has no partisan interest in Liberia; it is there only to help restore peace and a climate of confidence which can enable the political process to take root and bear fruits.

It bears repeating, therefore, that the solution to the Liberian crisis rests ultimately with the Liberians themselves. It behoves the Liberian authorities to provide a secure environment for ECOMOG, UNOMIL and the humanitarian organizations to carry out their respective mandates and minister to the needs of the civilian population, particularly the refugees and the internally displaced persons.

The task of disarmament and demobilization of the Liberian combatants, which number at least 60,000, is certainly arduous. It was in recognition of this that Nigeria decided to increase its contingent in ECOMOG by two battalions, aside from disbursing substantial funds for the procurement of communications and other vital equipment for the force. The capacity of ECOMOG is being constrained by inadequate logistic support. We therefore wish to remind those countries that had offered to provide such support not to renege, in the interest of peace and security in Liberia, on their commitment or promise. We also hope that countries will redeem their pledges of support to Liberia, in addition to their contributions to the Liberian Trust Fund. It is our honest view that the political programme in Liberia, including the elections scheduled for August 1996 under the provisions of the Abuja Agreement, can succeed only when disarmament, demobilization reintegration of disarmed combatants into civilian life and national reconciliation have been successfully carried out.

In concluding, let me say that the Security Council, for its own sake, and the international community at large

have a duty to stay the course in Liberia until peace is won. In line with the proverbial wisdom, the Liberian snake has been scotched but not killed. We therefore hope that the Security Council will see its way clear to extend UNOMIL's mandate for a further period of four months, until 31 May 1996. It is the honourable thing to do.

The President: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his welcome to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Council for this month and for the outstanding way in which you have guided its work. I also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for his excellent work last month.

We welcome the presence in the Council of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia, whose statement on the development of the situation in his country is of great interest in the context of our current deliberations.

The signing by the Liberian parties of the Abuja Agreement on 19 August last year and the ensuing cease-fire were events of major importance, marking a crucial stage in the process of restoring peace to Liberia.

It should be emphasized that this was achieved only after several years of effort and sacrifice by several parties, particularly the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which, in cooperation with the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), played a key role in achieving the progress which eventually led to the signing of the Abuja Agreement. The international community warmly welcomed that event, and was optimistic that the Agreement would be implemented.

Unfortunately, this optimism was severely dampened after the outbreak of incidents in various parts of the country, the most violent being the fighting at Tubmanburg between a Liberian faction and ECOMOG forces, at a time when the ECOMOG forces, in cooperation with UNOMIL, were preparing to supervise the implementation of the next stage in the Abuja Agreement — the disarmament and demobilization of the belligerents.

According to the report of the Secretary-General dated 23 January 1996

> "the developments in Tubmanburg confirmed the risks ECOMOG had taken in deploying its troops without the strength and resources necessary to carry out its mandate effectively." (*S/1996/47, para. 5*)

That indicates how fragile the Agreement between the Liberian factions remains without peace-keeping forces having the necessary financial and logistic resources to successfully perform their task.

Tunisia, as a member of the Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, has constantly worked in the African community and at the international level to restore peace to Liberia. President Ben Ali spared no effort after assuming the presidency of the OAU to encourage the Liberian parties to sit down at the negotiating table to resolve the conflict between them.

My delegation supports the good offices efforts presently under way, involving representatives of the national Transitional Government, the Liberian factions, ECOWAS, the United Nations and the OAU.

We would earnestly appeal to the Liberian parties to refrain from any action likely to compromise implementation of the Abujan Agreement, and to exercise restraint so as to avoid any escalation following the latest incidents, particularly since progress towards peace in Liberia requires, above all, respect for the commitments entered into regarding implementation of that Agreement.

It is equally true that, to consolidate the peace process in that country, the international community must honour its commitments to provide assistance to Liberia. We would like to express the hope that the donor countries will provide increased assistance in order to respond adequately to the needs of the present stage of demobilization of the combatants and their reintegration into civilian life.

The assistance of the international community is also necessary to enable the ECOMOG forces to continue their efforts with the same effectiveness and efficiency.

We hope that extending UNOMIL's mandate for a further four-month period, as proposed by the Secretary-General, will, once sanctioned by the Security Council,

make it possible to continue efforts to consolidate peace in Liberia in a framework of regional and international cooperation, which remains of crucial importance for the implementation of the Abuja Agreement.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Ethiopia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Eteffa (Ethiopia): May I first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January and on your very effective leadership. I should also like to pay special tribute to the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Lavrov, for the competent and outstanding manner in which he presided over the affairs of the Council during the month of December. We also commend the Secretary-General for his concrete, thought-provoking and comprehensive report and observations, as reflected in document S/1996/47.

May I also express deeply felt appreciation to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia for his briefing.

Fifty years ago Liberia was one of the three independent African countries, with leaders who commanded respect at home and internationally. Today, unfortunately, it hardly has a functioning Government that has effective control over its territory. Liberia deserves our sympathy and action. The people of Liberia, like people anywhere, are entitled to peace, stability and security. The situation in Liberia, which is before the Council, is of the utmost importance to the African countries and to our regional organization — the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It is therefore a privilege and an honour for me to participate in this debate today in my capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the OAU, His Excellency Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

It is quite some time since the plight of Liberia captured the attention of the international community. But the suffering of the Liberian people has not been alleviated. At times we saw promising signs and the signing of Agreements which appeared to represent a breakthrough. Unfortunately, however, some of the Agreements are violated before the ink on the documents has had time to dry.

Let us respond to the problems in Liberia with concrete action in terms of the commitment of financial resources and logistical arrangements for the peace-keepers as well as by extending the mandate of United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), so that a lasting solution can be found to the plight of the Liberian people. It goes without saying that it is only the people of Liberia who can bring about a lasting political settlement to the problems of their country. The international community can only assist them to do so.

There should be a political settlement of the conflicts and the creation of a peaceful situation in Liberia before the legislative and presidential elections can take place in August 1996, in accordance with the Abuja Agreement. Of course, it would be naive to expect that free and fair elections can take place without demobilization of combatants and without extensive consultations which might lead to reconciliation and the creation of a generally conducive environment before the elections. Furthermore, the exchange of prisoners should be effected as agreed and the delivery of humanitarian relief assistance should flow, unhindered by any of the factions. The Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) should be allowed to function until elections take place in August. In this election process, the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report should be implemented; that is, that UNOMIL should be in a position

> "To observe and verify the election process, in consultation with the Organization of African Unity and ECOWAS, including the legislative and presidential elections to be held in accordance with provisions of the peace agreements". *(resolution 1020 (1995), para. 2 (g))*

It seems that there is a formidable task and a real challenge ahead of us to remove the increased and increasing insecurity in many areas of Liberia. Unless these challenges are met, it will not be practical to have meaningful elections in August. Along with the improvement of the security situation in Liberia, the process of disengagement, disarmament and demobilization should be dealt with as priority items.

The civilians who are displaced and trapped between ECOMOG and ULIMO-J forces outside Kle should be helped in every way possible, in order to release them as soon as possible; and while they are still trapped, humanitarian assistance should be rendered to them. All concerned should help this group of civilians and other

civilians in similar situations, and all other victims of the fighting should be assisted.

The recent agreement between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the LNTG in regard to the repatriation of the estimated 750,000 Liberian refugees should be implemented as part of the general process of creating a conducive environment for reconciliation and political settlement, which would eventually lead to recovery and reconstruction. The intended special consultation meeting of the LNTG and its international partners in March 1996 to address the problems of recovery is an undertaking which should be encouraged and assisted by the international community at large. The preparations toward this end should be under way shortly, according to the Secretary-General's recommendation. Needless to say, this is an effort in the right direction. However, real, positive results cannot be expected unless, to use the Secretary-General's words,

> "a safe and secure environment can be established throughout the country." *(S/1996/47, para. 43)*

The success of the peace process in Liberia, as much as it depends on the cooperation of the parties concerned, also requires greater commitment on the part of the international community. The cooperation and coordination among the United Nations, OAU and ECOWAS should be further strengthened. In particular, we wish to emphasize the need for ensuring adequate resources and logistical support required for the operations of UNOMIL and ECOMOG. The report of the Secretary-General before the Council indicates that the status of assessed contributions to the UNOMIL special account leaves much to be desired. As regards the United Nations Trust Fund for Liberia, we urge the international community to make generous contributions to the Fund, so as to enable ECOMOG to fulfil the challenging task of ensuring peace and stability in Liberia.

The Organization of African Unity closely monitors the situation in Liberia. The fifth ordinary session of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, held in Addis Ababa from 18 to 19 December 1995, expressed its satisfaction at the conclusion of the Abuja Agreement that led to the establishment of a new Transitional Government in Liberia. While commending the current Chairman of ECOWAS, His Excellency President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, and other leaders of West Africa for their untiring efforts to bring about peace in Liberia, the OAU Central Organ also appealed for international assistance to Liberia, and, in particular, for generous contributions to the Trust Fund established by the United Nations Secretary-General, in order to enable ECOMOG to fulfil its mandate. The OAU has also committed itself to provide financial support to assist ECOMOG in carrying out its important tasks.

We share the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report that, in spite of recent setbacks, the peace process in Liberia will succeed, given the full support and cooperation of all concerned. We therefore join the Secretary-General in urging the faction leaders to ensure observance of the cease-fire and to cooperate fully with ECOMOG and UNOMIL, in particular as regards the disarmament, disengagement and demobilization of combatants.

At the same time, we wish to point out once again that the success of ECOMOG in ensuring implementation of the Abuja Agreement depends a great deal on the availability of the necessary resources. In this regard, we call on the international community to provide such resources and logistical support as are critically important for the successful fulfilment of ECOMOG's tasks.

The cooperation and partnership existing between the United Nations, OAU and ECOWAS should be continued and further enhanced until a lasting political solution to the Liberian problem is achieved, in accordance with the Abuja Agreement. To this end, we call on the Security Council to extend UNOMIL's mandate to ensure its continued cooperation and coordination with the OAU and ECOWAS in the fulfilment of the challenging tasks of ensuring peace and stability in Liberia.

The President: I thank the representative of Ethiopia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Czech Republic. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency for January 1996, and to thank Ambassador Lavrov for the excellent job he did as President last month — the last month of our own tenure on the Council. Also, I wish to congratulate new Council members: Chile, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, the Republic of Korea and especially

Poland, which has assumed the seat reserved for our regional group.

One may wonder how the interests of the Czech Republic are specially affected by the situation in far-away Liberia, such that we would be granted the privilege of participating in the discussion under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. We feel that Article 44 of the Charter provides us with grounds to participate, inasmuch as the employment of contingents of the Czech armed forces is involved. In fact, the Czech Republic is the only European country that actually participates in the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). These remarks of ours would thus have been addressed to the troop-contributors meeting, but we are grateful to the Council for having provided this opportunity to actually get them on record, and it is an honour to speak in the presence of the Foreign Minister of Liberia.

We find the Secretary-General's report alarming. Hopes concerning the peace process in Liberia have flowed and ebbed, but they definitely crested with the signing of the accord in Abuja. All along, the Security Council has warned at various times when deciding on the UNOMIL mandate that, if significant improvement is not attained, this time might be the last time the mandate is extended. We do not consider the fighting in Tubmanburg and the casualties suffered by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to constitute such an improvement, to state the obvious. We salute ECOMOG and the memory of its fallen comrades and extend our deepest sympathy to their families.

We strongly condemn the attacks by ULIMO-J. Such outbreaks severely stretch the willingness of disinterested countries to continue assisting Liberia. In the light of these events, the Czech Republic has very seriously reflected on the future of UNOMIL and on the purpose served by exposing its own participants to the attendant dangers. In our final evaluation, though, we feel that the conflagration caused by ULIMO-J has not spread into other areas of the country. At this moment at least, we do not see a pandemic civil war erupting again. The important thing now is to intensify pressure on Liberia's factions to meet their commitments, to provide security guarantees to ECOMOG and to UNOMIL, and to proceed with disarmament and demobilization. In turn, the factions will need concrete help as their members reintegrate into civilian life.

Upon careful consideration, my authorities have reached the conclusion that withdrawing our support from UNOMIL, modest though it is, would at this time be unfortunate. We therefore support the Secretary-General's recommendation that UNOMIL's mandate be extended by several months, and we will continue participating in the Mission. However, as many Members have stated many times — and the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, who has just addressed the Council, was just the most recent in this long line — the primary responsibility for the future of Liberia lies with the Liberians themselves, including ULIMO-J. In the event of future serious threats to the security of UNOMIL, of ECOMOG or indeed of the Liberian people, my country will be prepared to seriously re-evaluate our continuing support for UNOMIL.

The President: I thank the representative of the Czech Republic for the kind words he addressed to me.

The final speaker is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Kaba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): I apologize for the absence of Ambassador Kacou Gervais; he is at present engaged in the work of the Economic and Social Council.

Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on the diligent way in which you are guiding the work of the Security Council this month. I also thank your predecessor for his good work last month. My delegation wishes the new members of the Security Council success during their tenure, and thanks the outgoing members for their valuable contribution to the work of the Council.

Liberia is a brother and neighbour of Côte d'Ivoire. Our families are intertwined, and everything that affects Liberia inevitably affects Côte d'Ivoire as well; hence the fraternal hospitality my country has extended to Liberian refugees. It is because of our warm, fraternal friendship for the people of Liberia that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire is making efforts towards the restoration of peace in that country. Everyone is aware of my Government's initiatives to bring to this afflicted fraternal country the peace it so greatly needs; the various Yamoussoukro Agreements have been an important element in the Liberian peace process.

The excellent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Liberia leads us to consider a number of

points, including the role of the United Nations in Liberia. We consider that its role has been a positive one, and we hope it will continue until Liberia has restored its full internal balance. The United Nations should not withdraw its support from Liberia at a time when stability is being restored through efforts aimed at bolstering national institutions, including through free, democratic elections under the auspices of the Liberian National Transitional Government.

Côte d'Ivoire is playing an active part in the combined efforts of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States to bring about the implementation of the Abuja Agreement. We hope that, at a time when there is movement towards a final resolution, the international community will not abandon Liberia in mid-stream. My Government hopes that these efforts will continue. We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General, set out in his report, document S/1996/47 of 23 January 1996, to renew the mandate of UNOMIL and provide ECOMOG with the resources it needs to carry out its mission.

I wish in conclusion to offer the condolences of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to the families of the victims of the Tubmanburg incident.

My delegation thanks all those who are contributing to the restoration of peace in Liberia.

The President: I thank the representative of Côte d'Ivoire for the kind words she addressed to me.

There are no further speakers.

This is, in the nature of things, not a meeting for drawing formal conclusions or making decisions. I would like just to say that I think that this occasion has proved a useful exchange in this formal, and therefore open and transparent, mode, and that our discussion this morning has been enriched by three features: first, by the presence of the Foreign Minister of Liberia himself, to whom we are grateful for having taken the trouble to come and to speak to us in this way; secondly, by the happy coincidence that this meeting came very shortly after the return from Liberia of Ambassador Albright and her briefing to us before she had even had a chance to debrief to her own Head of State; and, thirdly, of course, by the fact that we have had this discussion enriched by a wider airing of views by other Member States which are not at present on the Security Council itself.

As I said, it is not, I think, for the presidency in this case to try and draw conclusions from this meeting, but I think it is fair to highlight some of the many elements which were raised in this wide-ranging discussion. I have in mind particularly that more or less all speakers emphasized that the peace process in Liberia is now at a critical juncture; secondly, that the efforts of everyone concerned will be required if recent setbacks are to be overcome; thirdly, that in this there is a complementarity between national, regional and wider international efforts; fourthly, that all speakers underlined the need for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to have our continued support and highlighted — at least some speakers did — the question of resources and logistic support in that connection; and, finally, that many speakers made the point that the conflicts and ambitions which are at loggerheads in Liberia seem to be those among the élite, not among the people at large. And the conclusion was drawn by some in their interventions that the main responsibility therefore lay with the leaders of the parties and the factions in that country.

This wider discussion today, at this first reading of the Secretary-General's report, will be very useful background for those of us who are members of the Council and who now have to proceed to further consideration of the Secretary-General's recommendations — namely, for the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until the end of May, with provision for a progress report by the end of March. Those further consultations will take place imminently. May I just remind everybody in closing that there will also be a troop-contributors' consultation on UNOMIL tomorrow afternoon.

The meeting rose at 2 p.m.